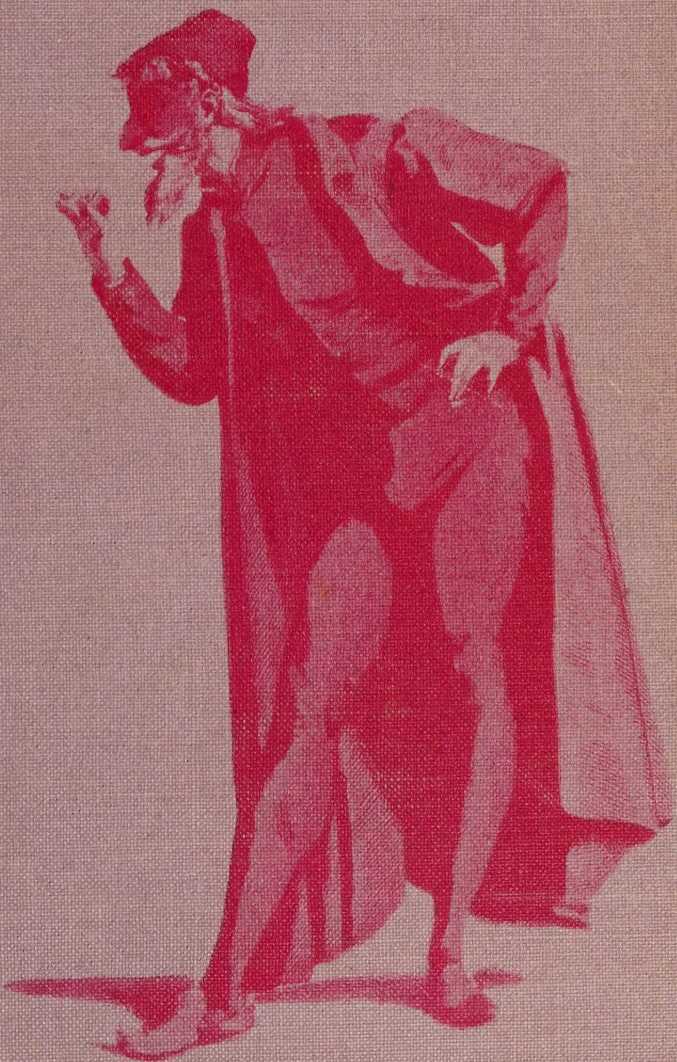

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The History of the Harlequinade

BENJAMIN BLOM
New York/London

Volume Two

The History of

the Harlequinade

Maurice Sand

First Published London, 1915
by Benjamin Blom, Inc., Bronx, New York 10452
and 56 Doughty Street, London W.C. 1
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 68-20244
Printed in the United States of America

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THE HISTORY OF THE HARLEQUINADE

VIII

PANTALOON

From the Greek comedies down to our own modern vaudevilles, from the old satyr besmeared with grape-juice down to Cassandre besmeared with snuff, at the hands of Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, Macchiavelli, Beolco, Molière and Goldoni, the old man of the comedy, like the old man of the farce, has always been more or less niggardly, credulous, libertine, duped and mocked, afflicted with rheum and coughs, and, above all, unhappy.

Whether he is called Strepsiades, Philacleo or Blephirus, in the comedies of Aristophanes; Theuropides, Euclio, Demipho, Demænetus, Stalino or Nicobulus, in those of Plautus; Messer Andronico, Pasquale, Placido, Cornelio or Tomaso, in those of Beolco; Pantalone, Zanobio, Facanappa, Bernardone, the Doctor, the Baron, Cassandro or the Biscegliese, in the Commedia dell' Arte; Collofonio, Pandolfo, Diomede, Demetrio, Coccolin, Gerontio or Bartolo, in the Italian *commedia sostenuta*; Gaultier Garguille, or Jacquemin Jadot, in the French farce; or yet Orgon, Gorgibus, Arpagon or Sganarelle, in the pieces of Molière—fundamentally he is always, under

whatever of these names we find him, the Pappus or the Casnar of the Atellanæ.

"Pappus" (says M. Ferdinand Fouque), "whom the Greeks called Πάππος, is sometimes a miserly, libidinous, finicking and astute old man, sometimes a simple old fellow of good faith; and he is always a dupe, be it of a mistress, a rival, a son, a lackey or some other intriguer. He corresponds to the Doctor of the Bolognese and the Pantaloon of the Venetians. A cornaline shows us his bearded mask. . . . He is dressed in purple. The Osci had another old man called Casnar, who nowise differed from Pappus."

In the *Mostellaria* of Plautus the son of Theuropides, an old Athenian merchant, falls madly in love with a musician during the absence of his father; he purchases her and takes her to his father's house, where in the company of several friends he abandons himself to all manner of orgies. One day, when our gay revellers had drunk *à la grecque*—that is to say, until they could not stand—old Theuropides arrives. Tranio, a veritable Scapin, the young man's devoted slave, invents a ruse to keep the old man from the house. He orders the principal door to be closed and bolted, and then concealing himself near at hand he firmly awaits Theuropides.

THEUROPIDES. What is the meaning of this? My house shut up in broad daylight? (*He knocks.*) Hola! Someone! Open the door!

TRANIO (*approaching and pretending not to recognise him*). Who is this man who comes so close to the house?

THEUROPIDES. No one answers, but it seems to me, unless I have lost my senses, that here comes Tranio, my slave.

TRANIO. Oh, my lord Theuropides, my good master, what

happiness! Is it possible that it is you? Permit me to salute you and to wish you a good day. Has your health always been good in those far lands, my lord?

THEUROPIDES. I have always been in the health in which you see me now.

TRANIO. You could not be in better.

THEUROPIDES. And you others? Have your brains become addled in my absence?

TRANIO. But why, pray, should you ask that, my lord?

THEUROPIDES. Why? Because you all leave the house at once and none remains to take care of it. I was on the point of kicking down the door.

TRANIO. Oh, oh, sir! Did you really touch the door?

THEUROPIDES. And why should I not touch it? Not only have I touched it, but, as I tell you, I have almost broken it down.

TRANIO. You overwhelm me with dismay. Yet again I ask you, have you touched this house?

THEUROPIDES. What now? Do you take me for a liar? Am I not telling you that I not only touched, but that I knocked as loudly as I could?

TRANIO. Oh, gods!

THEUROPIDES. What's the matter?

TRANIO. By Hercules, you are wrong.

THEUROPIDES. What are you telling me?

TRANIO. It is impossible to tell you all the ill that you have done. It is atrocious, irreparable. You have committed a frightful sacrilege.

THEUROPIDES. How?

TRANIO. Oh, sir, withdraw at once, I beg of you, and quit this fatal house. At least come over here. But, in reality, now, did you touch the door?

THEUROPIDES. Of course. Of necessity I must have touched it, since I knocked. It is impossible to do the one without the other.

TRANIO. Alack, you are lost, you and yours.

THEUROPIDES. May the gods cause you to perish by your

augury, for you are also mine. But whatever do you mean?

TRANIO. Learn, sir, that some seven months ago we all abandoned that house, and that since then no one has set foot within it.

THEUROPIDES. The reason, quickly!

TRANIO. I implore you, sir, look well about you to see that no one is listening.

THEUROPIDES. There is no one; you may speak with confidence.

TRANIO. Take the trouble to look yet again.

THEUROPIDES. I tell you there is no one. You may speak your secret without fear.

TRANIO. A horrible crime must have been committed in that house.

THEUROPIDES. If you wish me to understand you, speak more clearly.

TRANIO. I mean that long ago, in your house, a crime of the blackest must have taken place. We discovered it but lately.

THEUROPIDES. What crime do you mean? Who can have been the author? Speak, wretch! Do not leave me longer in suspense.

TRANIO. The ancient proprietor of the house, he who sold it to you, had stabbed a guest with his own hand.

THEUROPIDES. And killed him?

TRANIO. Still worse. After robbing him, he buried him in the house itself. One evening when my lord your son had supped abroad, he went to bed upon returning home. We others did the same. Suddenly—I was sleeping profoundly at the time, and I had even forgotten to extinguish the lamp—suddenly, then, I heard my young master crying out. I ran to him and he assured me that the dead man had appeared to him whilst he was sleeping.

THEUROPIDES. But that was a dream, since he slept.

TRANIO. You are right. But listen. My young master related that the ghost had told him this——

THEUROPIDES. Still whilst he was asleep ?

TRANIO. That is true. The ghost behaved ill. I am astonished to think that a soul which for sixty years had been separated from its body should not have thought of choosing a moment in which your son was awake to pay his visit. I regret to point it out, sir, but you have at times a certain absence of mind which does little honour to your judgment.

THEUROPIDES. I am silent.

TRANIO. Here then word for word is what the old spectre said: "I am a stranger from beyond the seas, the guest of Diapontius. This is my dwelling, and this house is in my power. Orcus would have none of me in Acheron. He dismissed me brutally because, although my body has been buried, it received no honours of sepulture. I was tricked by my host, who drew me hither and murdered me for my money. He barely covered me with earth, and I remained hidden in this house. None but myself knows who I am, and I demand of you that you quit this house at once." These were his words, my lord. The house is accursed, given over to divine vengeance. I dare not speak to you of all the apparitions to be seen there every night. Sh ! Sh ! Listen, do you hear ?

THEUROPIDES (*scared*). What is it ? Oh, my poor Tranio, I implore you, by Hercules, tell me what you heard.

TRANIO. The door moved. Nevertheless I am certain that no one pushed it.

THEUROPIDES. I am stricken with fear. There is not a drop of blood left in my body. Who knows but that the dead may come to drag me living into hell ?

TRANIO (*aside, hearing movements in the house*). I am lost. They will ruin my comedy of phantoms and spectres by their folly. (*To* THEUROPIDES.) I am trembling with fear. Go, my lord, go from that door. Flee, in the name of Hercules, flee, I implore you.

THEUROPIDES. Tranio !

TRANIO (*pretending to mistake his master for a phantom*). Sir Spectre, do not call me ! I have done nothing ! I assure you that it was not I who knocked at the door.

THEUROPIDES (*trembling*). What ails you? With whom are you talking?

TRANIO. How, sir? Was it you who called me? In truth, I thought that it was the dead man who complained of the noise that you had made. But how do you happen to be still here? Begone, cover your head; go, and on no account look behind you.

THEUROPIDES (*fleeing*). Great and mighty Hercules, protect me against these rascally phantoms! (*Exit.*)

Pantaloon and Cassandre are no less credulous and poltroon than their ancestor Theuropides the Athenian.

Angelo Beolco presents two old men in one of his comedies (written *circa* 1530). One of these is Messer Demetrio, a doctor, who swears by the learned doctors of antiquity, Asclepiades, Hippocrates, Æsculapius and Galen; the other is Ser Cornelio,[1] a Venetian advocate, enamoured, notwithstanding his years and his infirmities, constantly spitting Latin and expressing himself pretentiously when in the society of Messer Demetrio, but employing the common dialect with a certain Prudentia, whose offices he desires with Beatrice, the lady with whom he is in love.

CORNELIO (*alone*). Never since I first drew breath and was cast naked upon this world have I been so truly destitute of ideas, so reduced (as if I had been shut up without eating or drinking, in the cave of some horrid monster, or as if I were taken in some colossal spider-web) as I am ever since I have been here, *ita et taliter quotiens*. I seem as one abandoned in an empty boat and left alone at the tiller on a storm-

[1] The names of Demetrio and Cornelio continued to be adopted in the theatre for old men's rôles, particularly in memorised comedies, such as *La Vedova, comedia facetissima* by Nicolo Buonaparte, a citizen of Florence, 1643.

swept sea. But if Hope will only open me her window a little, I shall get myself out of this embarrassment, and I shall so contrive, by means of money, presents, and my natural gifts, that I shall win the favour of this beautiful woman, worthy of the chisel of Sansovino. I will go find Prudentia, the world-chart of gallantry. . . . But here she comes, most opportunely. Good day to you. Where are you going, my charming Prudentia ?

PRUDENTIA. You will do well not to trouble me if your head is full of fantastic notions; I have not the time to be bothered with them. You are but a thief grown fat on the miseries of this poor world, for you would give nothing to a beggar.

CORNELIO. Prudentia, I do not wish to boast, but if you knew the alms I give, you would be astonished. Amongst other things I treat all the hospitals of this country to my old discarded clothes, and never a day of Lent passes but that I myself give the poor all my old *liards*.

PRUDENTIA. In this fashion you won't deprive yourself of much, and you behave in the same way in your love affairs. To procure assistance, you offer more than you have got, but, when the obstacle is overcome, you look the other way, you refuse to know those who have befriended you, and we find that we have served you for the love of Heaven.

CORNELIO. Aid me, Prudentia; you know that I am tender in the stomach and soft in the lungs. Wait! I shall give you full proof of my friendship. If you will promise me your assistance I promise you on my side to give you a pair of red stockings which I have worn only four times, and a quartern of excellent beans; this on condition that you will speak to that young girl, beautiful as a parrot by Aldo,[1] white as linen, light as a rabbit; I think that her name is Beatrice, and her mother's Sofronia; at least, so I have been told, for I do not know them otherwise, being a stranger.

[1] Aldo Manuzio, the famous Venetian printer of the fifteenth century (*sta zovene bella à muo un papagà in stampa d'Aldo*).

PRUDENTIA. I think I know them. I will do what I can to speak to them; and I will tell them so many little nothings about you that I am sure the lady will be yours at your pleasure. But how shall you contrive with all the infirmities that afflict you?

CORNELIO. Get along. You are a giraffe! for ever mocking. Do you think I am so deteriorated that I don't know how to set a horse to a gallop when I wish? Get along, you don't know me.

PRUDENTIA. No need to glorify yourself. I know your great and venerable stupidity. When you are with her, best not tell her your age. Do you understand?

CORNELIO. But for my illnesses, I could tell you some pretty things, and, thin as I am, I could turn twenty somersaults upon one hand, and, fatigued as I am, you should see how swiftly I could race.

PRUDENTIA. Very well, Messer Cornelio, since you are so hot upon this affair, trust me, I will so act that you shall be satisfied. Whilst waiting, I beg you to let me have four *bolognini* (four halfpence), which I shall be able to repay you only by saying a deal of good of you.

CORNELIO. May you sole my shoes if I have more than four *quattrini* (a halfpenny). My wife refuses to let me carry money because, she says, I sow it in the earth. But I promise you that if you bring me a favourable answer I shall without haggling give you three *bolognini* in old coin; they have a hole through the middle, so as to string them round the neck of a cat. Now I must go; I have been with you too long. Enough! You understand me. (*Exit.*)

PRUDENTIA (*alone*). Go! Go to the devil! you will have no trouble to get there. Now just consider me that old ill-accoutred beast. Admire with me, I implore you, the gallant adventure that has fallen into my hands. I am to serve him for money, this gouty, unclean, catarrhal old thing, who has taken it into his head to fall in love with such a beautiful and virtuous child!

Further on, Cornelio meets Truffa, and, following ever his amorous idea, he desires to seek the aid of sorcery, and makes offers to her so as to obtain the favours of the girl. "Look," says he, "if I may have this dove by means of *grimoires* and incantations without employing that rascally Prudentia, who is for ever hanging about me, I promise to give you my hat; you know the one I mean; the one which you bought from me some time ago, and which I still am wearing to restore its shape."

ii

Pantaloon, who gives his name to the breeches made all in one piece, is one of the masks of the Commedia dell' Arte.

"In Venice" (says M. Paul de Musset), "four improvising masks occurred in every piece: *Tartaglia*, a jabberer; *Truffaldino*, a Bergamese caricature; *Brighella*, representing public orators, and several popular types; and finally, the famous *Pantaloon*, personifying the Venetian bourgeois in all his absurdity, and bearing a name whose etymology is worthy of a commentary. The word is derived from *pianta-leone* (plant-the-lion). The old Venetian merchants, in their fury to acquire territory in the name of the Republic, planted the lion banner of St Mark wherever possible on the islands of the Mediterranean; and when they returned to boast of their conquests, the people mocked them by calling them *pianta-leoni*."

According to other authors Pantaloon derives his name simply from San Pantaleone, the ancient patron of Venice.

Pantaloon is sometimes a father, sometimes a husband; sometimes a widower or an old bachelor, still ambitious to please, and consequently very ridiculous; sometimes he is rich, sometimes poor, sometimes miserly and sometimes prodigal. But he is always a man of ripe age. A native of Venice, he ordinarily represents the merchant, the tradesman, the father of two daughters who are extremely difficult to guard. These are Isabella and Rosaura, or Camilla and Smeraldina, and they are in league with their soubrettes, Fiametta, Zerbinetta, Olivetta or Catta, to deceive the impotent vigilance of their senile parent.

In this situation he is always very avaricious, and very mistrustful. One may apply to him what the slave Strobilus says of his master Euclio in the *Aulularia* of Plautus:

"Pumice is not as dry as this old man. He is so miserly that when he goes to bed he takes the trouble to tie up the mouth of the bellows, so that they may not lose their wind during the night. When he washes himself he weeps the water which he is compelled to use. Some time ago the barber cut his nails. He carefully gathered up the parings and took them with him lest he should be a loser."

The by-names of starveling, skinflint, niggard, Pantaloon the needy, Pantaloon *cagh' in aqua*, fit him perfectly. The Bolognese and the Venetians deride the avarice of Pantaloon and of Doctor Balanzoni.

"They represent him" (says M. Frédéric Mercey) "in the act of embarking upon a debauch, sitting at an empty

table, eating hare soup, drinking claret diluted at the fountain in the corner, regaling themselves upon a duck-egg—of which they keep the yolk for themselves and give the white to their wives—and providing watered milk for their children; a meal which, as they assure us, occasions them no gastric overburdenings."

But Pantaloon is not always quite so mean. Occasionally he confines himself to being ridiculous. Dressed in his red pantaloons and dressing-gown, wearing upon his head his woollen cap, and shod in his Turkish slippers, he fully represents the ancient Venetian merchant running about his business, buying and selling, with a deal of talk, oaths and gestures. He is for ever pledging his honour for the truth of what he says. His ancient probity is well known, and if he hears any dispute arising, he runs to witness it. Should the discussion degenerate into a quarrel, he thrusts himself in, anxious to intervene as a mediator. But Pantaloon was born under an evil star. He so contrives that it is seldom indeed that blows do not result from his pacific intervention, and he stands his chance of receiving most of them.

Whether in Venice or on the mainland he is always unlucky. Having one day hired a horse to go riding, he took with him his lackey Harlequin. The old screw coming abruptly to a halt, Harlequin delivers a shower of blows to urge it onwards. The poor beast, in return, kicks him in the stomach. Harlequin, in a fury, picks up a paving stone to heave it at the horse; but his aim is so bad that the stone heavily strikes Pantaloon, who had retained his saddle. Pantaloon turns and perceives Harlequin holding his stomach and roaring.

"What an ill beast they have given us!" says he piteously to his lackey. "Can you believe that at the same time that it hit you in the stomach, it fetched me a kick in the middle of my back?"

Pantaloon is always exploited by someone, and Harlequin's duty is, as we have seen in the instance cited, to cause him to swallow the most fantastic shams. Harlequin, perceiving him so naïve, disguises himself as a merchant and is taken with the conceit to present him such a memoir as the following:—

"Two dozen chairs of Holland linen; fourteen tables of marzipan; six faïence mattresses full of scrapings of hay-cocks; a semolina bed-cover; six truffled cushions; two pavilions of spider-web trimmed with tassels made from the moustaches of Swiss doorkeepers; a syringe of the tail of a pig, with a handle in pile velvet."

Each of the articles is quoted at a fabulous price, but Pantaloon consigns the false merchant and his memoir to the devil.

His avarice sometimes gives Pantaloon a certain wit. One day he hears Harlequin speaking to himself, and saying in the course of casting up his accounts and writing down the figures: "You have no tail, but you shall have one!" and thus all the noughts become nines. Pantaloon takes the note, examines it in the presence of his lackey, and says, "You, you have a tail and you shall not have one," and thus he converts all the nines into noughts, to the great mortification of Harlequin. After that, Harlequin presents him with a more exact memoir: thus:

PANTALOON

To one quarter of roast veal, and one plaster of unguent for the scurvy .	3 livres	10 sols.
To one capon and one belt for Master Pantaloon	12 livres	
To one pasty for Harlequin and two bundles of hay for the master . .	1 livre	10 sols.
To one pound of fresh butter and to sweeping the chimney . . .		12 sols.
To tripe and a mouse-trap . .		10 sols.
To three sausages and the re-soling of a pair of old shoes . . .		15 sols.
To shaving the master and to mending sundry commodities . . .	1 livre	10 sols.
Total,	20 livres	7 sols.

Pantaloon has nothing to say to the figures, but he affects to take offence at seeing the various articles so ridiculously associated and in his anger throws the paper in the face of Harlequin instead of paying him.

In *Pantalone Spezier* (Pantaloon the Apothecary), of Giovanni Bonicelli, Pantaloon argues with his friend the Doctor, a learned man of law, upon the excellence of their respective professions. The argument ends in mutual insult. Presently, however, they desire to become reconciled. The Doctor makes the first advances and sends his gossip a basket containing two partridges. His servant Harlequin is despatched with it. Pantaloon is flattered by this courtesy, and gives Harlequin a gratuity of a quarter-ducat. The latter overwhelms him with blessings, makes a false exit, returns and relates that in his zeal he came so quickly that he has torn his breeches. Pantaloon is in the mood to be munificent. He gives him another quarter-ducat, saying: "Observe,

my lad, I do not lend it to you, I give it to you absolutely." Harlequin blesses Pantaloon all over again, makes shift to go, and returns once more. He owes a little to the tailor who is to mend his breeches; this tailor, who is miserly and cruel, has threatened him that if he does not bring him a quarter-ducat he will on the very next occasion that he meets him deprive him of his pretty little hat (*suo gentil capellino*). Can Pantaloon possibly suffer that such an injury should be done to his old friend the Doctor through the person of his servant? Pantaloon yields once more. But Harlequin returns yet again, and now craves the wherewithal to satisfy a sempstress from whom his mother has bought a gown for which she cannot pay. The sempstress threatens to withhold the cloth, which would be an infamous thing. Pantaloon gives yet again, but with the declaration that this time it is no more than a loan. Harlequin accepts the condition and departs in earnest. Pantaloon opens the basket, and instead of partridges finds it to contain a ram's head with horns. He calls Harlequin back. "I am afraid," says he, "that some of the money I gave you was bad; return it to me, and I may give you a good ducat instead." Harlequin, as credulous as he is astute, returns all the money, whereupon Pantaloon throws the ram's head at him, telling him to be off with the head of his father, and threatening to beat him if he reappears.

"In his shop, the apothecary Pantaloon plays the most villainous tricks upon his customers, whilst his servants, Nane and Mantecha, whom he starves, devour his inoffensive drugs upon the ground that they have the merit of being filling. He argues with his workmen concerning a minute of time

which he claims they owe him. When it is a question of paying them, he never has a halfpenny; he cannot even give them the wherewithal to dine. At last, when they come to threats, he authorises them to go and fetch on his behalf something from the inn in a little iron mortar as big as the hollow of his hand, recommending them to take great care not to break it. He drives out his little apprentice Mantecha at the hour of dinner. Tofolo, the father of Mantecha, comes to plead on behalf of his son. Pantaloon consents to take him back, but on condition that he shall go home to dinner."

He does not forget the practical jokes of which he has been made the butt, for when his will is opened it is found to read: "I bequeath to my servant Harlequin twenty-five strokes of a whip well laid on." Sometimes, however, Pantaloon is in high and brilliant circumstances. He is then so rich and so noble that he might well become a doge. He has magnificent villas and millions in his coffers, and he is then *Don Pantaleone.* He is dressed in velvets, silks and satins, his garments conforming always to the mode of Venice of the sixteenth century. He is the confidant of princes, the counsellor of doges, perhaps a member of the Ten. It is then that he flaunts his erudition, that he enlightens by his advice the most illustrious marquises of Italy. He is summoned to settle their differences, but, whether he is noble or simple, he so thoroughly shuffles the cards that swords are drawn in the end and, being reduced to employ force to settle quarrels, he plies his Damascene poniard to right and left.

Pantaloon is always very much in vogue in Venice, in the Bolognese and in Tuscany.

"A surprising thing" (says M. Frédéric Mercey) "is that our century, which, if it has not destroyed everything, has at least altered everything, has been unable to strip the mask from any of the Italian buffoons. They have braved the inconstancy of the public, the tyranny of fashion, the caprice of authors; they have witnessed the death of that Venetian aristocracy which despised them; they have survived the Republic and the Council of Ten; Pantaloon, Harlequin and Brighella, the three masks of Venice, have buried the three Inquisitors of State. Who is it, what is it, that has saved them from these revolutions and these catastrophes? Their popularity."

Pantaloon has been served up in every sauce in Italy, particularly towards the end of the eighteenth century. He has been given every shade of character, and every social condition, like the Neapolitan Pulcinella. He has been played with and without his brown mask with its grey moustaches, although tradition exacts that he should always wear it.

Riccoboni writes as follows concerning the type of Pantaloon at the beginning of the eighteenth century:—

"As regards the character of Pantaloon, he was represented at first as a merchant, a simple fellow of good faith, but always in love, and for ever the dupe of a rival, a son, a lackey, or a serving woman; sometimes, and particularly within the last hundred years, he has been seen as a kindly father of a family, a man of honour, tenacious to his word and severe towards his children. Always has it been doomed that

he should be the dupe of those who surround him, either with a view to extracting money from his pocket notwithstanding his parsimony, or to reduce him to surrender his daughter in marriage to a lover notwithstanding other engagements which he had made. In short, the character of Pantaloon has done the service intended by fable ; whenever it has been necessary to make of him a virtuous man, he has been an example to age in the matter of discretion ; when the intention of fable has carried the poet to invest him with weaknesses he has been the very type of a vicious old rake. For all this there exists the precedent set by Plautus, who presents in his comedies old men sometimes virtuous and sometimes vicious, according to the intentions of the story which is developed. In the last fifty years there has been a notion in Venice to correct certain customs of the country and apply them to the personage of Pantaloon. To carry out this idea he has been represented sometimes as a husband or an extremely jealous lover, sometimes as a debauchee, and sometimes as a ruffler."

In 1716 the costume of Pantaloon had undergone some change. He no longer wore his long *caleçon*, but replaced them by breeches and stockings; he preserved the traditional colours, but often he played in his long gaberdine, which originally had been red, and later black. It was when the Republic of Venice lost the kingdom of Negropont that the whole city put on mourning. Pantaloon, like a good citizen, could not wish to run counter to the laws and customs of his country. He adopted the black gaberdine, and he has worn it ever since.

Nevertheless, in the nineteenth century, Pantaloon gave up his Venetian dress ; be became modernised. He assumed a

powdered wig and dressed himself like Cassandre—that is to say, in the fashion of the time of Louis XIV.

In 1578 Giulio Pasquati, born in Padua, was engaged by the *Gelosi* troupe, then in Florence, to play the parts of Pantaloon and Magnifico. In 1580 these rôles were being played in the *Uniti* troupe by an actor named Il Braga. In 1630, in the *Fedeli* troupe, we find them played by Luigi Benotti, a native of Vicenza; in 1645 by Cialace Arrighi in the troupe of Mazarin. In 1653, at the Petit Bourbon, a Modenese named Turi was playing them, and continued to play until his death in 1670.

In 1670, this troupe having no one to take Turi's place, Louis XIV. desired that an actor should be requested from the Duke of Modena. This prince chose Antonio Riccoboni, father of Luigi Riccoboni, known as Lelio, who went to France in 1716. But Antonio refused, preferring to remain in the service of the Duke of Modena. It was then that these rôles underwent a change of name on the Italian stage in Paris, and the character was undertaken by Romagnesi (Cinthio). In the scenarii of Gherardi there was not a single Pantaloon. This type became *Géronte, Oronte, Gaufichon, Trafiquet, Persillet, Sotinet, Brocantin, Tortillon, Goguet, Grognard, Jacquemart, Boquillard, Prudent.* Here is a scene from Gherardi between Brocantin and his daughters.

Brocantin. What is that work you are doing?

Columbine. It is a valance, but I am afraid that I am making it too small, for if by good luck I should come to be married——

Brocantin (*in a rage*). If by good luck or ill luck you should come to be married! I know your ways. You are not

always to be seen with a needle and a piece of embroidery in your hand, and you can sometimes wield the pen. But that is not what I want to talk about now. Leave your work and listen to me. (*They sit down.*) Marriage—— (*To* COLUMBINE.) Oh, you are laughing already, are you? Faith, there is no need to shake your bridle. . . . Marriage, I say, being a custom as ancient as the world, for there were marriages before you, and there will still be marriages after you——

COLUMBINE. I know, papa. I heard that ever so long ago.

BROCANTIN. I have resolved, so as to perpetuate the family of Brocantin—— You perceive what I am coming to? I have resolved, in short, to get married.

ISABELLA *and* COLUMBINE (*together*). Oh, father!

BROCANTIN. Ah, my daughters, you are very astonished! Yet can it be denied that I am still a fine figure of a man? Consider my air, my shape, my lightness (*he leaps and stumbles*).

ISABELLA. You are going to be married, then, father?

BROCANTIN. Yes, if you think it good, my child.

COLUMBINE. To a woman?

BROCANTIN. No. To an organ pipe. What a question!

ISABELLA. You are marrying a woman?

BROCANTIN. I think that each of you has her wits in a sling. Am I beyond the age? Do you not know that one is never older than one seems? And Monsieur Visautrou, my apothecary, was telling me only this morning, whilst giving me some medicine, that I look less than forty-five.

COLUMBINE. Oh, my father, that was because he was not looking you in the face.

BROCANTIN. I am as I am, but I feel that I need a wife. I am bursting with health, and I have found a young woman such as I could desire, beautiful, young, respectable, rich—in short, a chance in a thousand.

ISABELLA. Another than I would tell you, my father, what you risk in marrying. But I, who know the respect which I owe you, will only tell you that since you are in such good health you are very wise to take a wife.

BROCANTIN. Ah, you take the thing in a proper spirit. Since you are so reasonable, learn that I am in treaty about a marriage for you.

ISABELLA *and* COLUMBINE (*together*). Oh, my father!

BROCANTIN. Oh, my daughters!

In 1712 the Pantaloon of the forain troup of Ottavio was named Luigi Berlucci. His reputation was eclipsed by that of Giovanni Crevilli, who, after having long played in Italy, appeared in the French forain theatres and became known as the Venetian Pantaloon.

Alborghetti, born in Venice, who performed under the mask for a long time in Italy the parts of fathers, jealous husbands and tutors, always under the name of Pantaloon, went to France with the Regent's company in 1716. He was a man of means, and he added to his talent for the theatre the most irreproachable morals, but his rather severe character caused him at times to treat an estimable wife too harshly. Alborghetti died on the 4th January 1731, at the age of fifty-five.

In 1732 Fabio Sticotti took up this line. He had been in the company since 1716, and he had followed his wife, Ursula Astori, the Cantatrice of the troupe.

"Sticotti, a gentleman of Friuli, in the territories of the Republic of Venice, was of a good appearance, and no less in request in society on account of his extreme joviality than well received in the theatre for his talent. He had two sons, Antonio and Micaëlo Sticotti, who played at the Comédie-Italienne, and a daughter, Agatha Sticotti, who appeared a few times in the theatre, but who became better known for her estimable qualities, and for the invincible attachment of

a man of merit, who married her notwithstanding the persecution of an irritated family."

Fabio Sticotti died at the age of sixty-five, in Paris, on the 17th December 1741.

Carlo Veronese, father of Coraline, and of Camilla, was also seen in the rôles of Pantaloon. He was himself a good actor, but his reputation was eclipsed by that of his daughters, for whom he wrote a great number of pieces. He filled the rôles of Pantaloon from 1744 until his death in 1759.

Colalto made his début in Paris in 1759, but he was not accepted by the public until the following year. Grimm speaks as follows of his talent :—

"On the 17th December 1744, the Italian comedians gave the first performance of *I Tre Fratelli Gemelli Veneziani*, an Italian piece in prose by the Sieur Colalto (Pantaloon). The idea is taken from the story of 'The Three Hunchbacks.' The resemblance which it offers to the *Menechme* of Goldoni detracts nothing from the merit of the author, who has surpassed his models. But the point upon which it would be difficult to over-praise him is the incredible perfection with which himself he plays the three rôles of the three brothers Zanetto. The changes in his appearance, his voice and his character, which he varies from scene to scene according to which of the three he represents, is a thing unbelievable that leaves nothing to be desired. This piece, which is not written, which is no more than a scenario, is perfectly played by almost all the actors, but especially by the Sieur Colalto, by Madame Bacelli, in the rôle of Eleonore, and by the Sieur Marignan, who plays the Com-

missary with a truth and comicality very much above that of Préville. They have, moreover, the advantage of varying their business and their dialogue at every performance, and the continued intoxication of the public for this piece of itself nourishes the wit of the actors."

Colalto died in September of 1777. "His personal character was of a modesty and a simplicity little common in his class. He knew no other happiness than that of living peacefully in the bosom of his family, and doing good to the unfortunates whom chance brought to the notice of his generosity. He died of a very protracted and very painful disease. His children, who never quitted his bedside, beheld him expiring in their arms. He appreciated all their care, and his last words were the expression of his gratitude. His eyes had fallen upon a print of *The Paralytic Served by his Children.* The following lines are inscribed at the foot of the picture :

" 'If the truth of a picture is the truth of the object, how wise was the artist to place this scene in a village !'

" 'My children,' said the moribund in a feeble voice, 'the author of those lines did not know you.' "

In Italy towards 1750 Darbés became noteworthy as a good Pantaloon. Darbés was the director of an Italian company. He went one day to Goldoni to procure a play from his pen ; he obtained, not without considerable trouble, the comedy *Tonin, Belia Gracia.* He played in it the part of Pantaloon, and as the character of this father was serious, Darbés thought well to perform without a mask. Goldoni's piece fell flat. To what was this due ? Was it the fault of the piece or of the

actor? Goldoni wrote another play for Darbés, who then resumed the traditional mask. This piece succeeded beyond the hopes of the author and of the leader of the troupe. Thereafter Darbés never again put aside the mask and challenged, with Goldoni for his author, all the Pantaloons of Italy: Francesco Rubini at San Luca, Corrini at San Samuele of Venice, Ferramonti at Bologna, Pasini in Milan, Luigi Benotti in Florence, Golinetti and Garelli, Giuseppe Franceschini, and others.

iii

Such as he still remained in the nineteenth century, although somewhat out of fashion in Italy, THE DOCTOR was first presented on the stage in 1560 by Lucio Burchiella. Sometimes he is very learned, a man of law, a jurisconsult; more rarely he is a physician. Doctor Graziano or Baloardo Grazian, is a native of Bologna. He is a member of the Accademia della Crusca, a philosopher, an astronomer, a grammarian, a rhetorician, a cabalist and a diplomatist. He can talk upon any subject, pronounce upon any subject, but notwithstanding that his studies were abnormally prolonged he knows absolutely nothing, which, however, does not hinder him from citing inappropriately "the Latin tags which he garbles," says M.F. Mercey, "often culled from fables which he denaturalises, changing Cyparissus into a fountain, and Biblis into a cypress, causing the three Graces to sever the thread of our destinies whilst the Fates preside over the toilet of Venus; and this with an unrivalled aplomb and all the intrepidity of foolishness."

When he is a lawyer he is clear-sighted only in those affairs

with which he is not entrusted, and his pleadings are so interesting that the court falls asleep and the public departs, thereby compelling him regretfully to cut short his address. Frequently he is the father of a family, and it is usual then for his daughter, Columbine or Isabella, to denounce the avarice which has earned him the nickname of Doctor Scrapedish. Often he uses all his endeavours to please the ladies, and sometimes even he is the sighing lover, notwithstanding his advanced years and great belly, both of which should give him ample matter for reflection. Ponderous and ridiculous in his manners as in his speech, he is played upon by his lackeys, saving on those rare occasions when they are more stupid than himself. If he inclines to pleasantries such pleasantries invariably have their roots in ill-will.

From 1560 to the middle of the seventeenth century the Doctor was always dressed from head to foot in black, arrayed in the robe usual to men of science, professors and lawyers of the sixteenth century ; under this long robe he wore another shorter one reaching to the knees ; his shoes were black. It was only with the coming of the Italian company to Paris in 1653 that Agostino Lolli assumed the short breeches, the wide soft ruff, cut his doublet after the fashion of that of the days of Louis XIV., and replaced the bonnet, which presented too much analogy with that of the lackeys, by a felt hat with an extravagant brim.

" The city of Bologna, which is the very home of sciences and letters, and where there is a famous university and a number of foreign colleges, has always supplied us with a great number of learned men, and particularly of doctors, who

occupied the public chairs of that university. These doctors had a robe which they wore at lectures and in the town. The notion was very wisely conceived to transform the Bolognese Doctor into another old man who might play side by side with Pantaloon, and their two costumes became extremely comical when seen together. The Doctor is a never-ending babbler, a man who finds it impossible to open his mouth without spouting forth sententiousness and scraps of Latin. It is not impossible that this character may have been copied from nature. To this day we may see pedants and doctors doing the like. Many comedians have held different views on the subject of the Doctor's character. Some have thought well to speak in a sensible manner and to make lengthy declamations manifesting the greatest possible erudition, adorning their sentences by Latin quotations taken from the gravest authors. Others have preferred to render the character more comical: instead of presenting a learned Doctor they have presented an ignorant one, who spoke the macaronic Latin of Merlin Coccaïe, or something like it. The first were perforce compelled to know something so as to avoid true solecisms in good faith. The others were under the same obligation of knowledge, but they needed genius in addition; for I am persuaded that more wit is required to misapply a sentence than to apply it in its true sense" (L. Riccoboni).

The black mask which covers no more than the forehead and the nose of the Doctor, together with the exaggerated colour of his cheeks, are directly derived from the Bolognese jurisconsult of the sixteenth century, who had a large port-wine mark over part of his face.

Doctor Balanzoni *Lombarda* (a surname applied to this personage because Bernardino Lombardi and Roderigo Lombardi played the part in Italy, the first during the sixteenth century and the second during the eighteenth) wears, like Basilio, a great hat turned up on both sides. Like the other Doctor already mentioned, he is from Bologna. There is a deal of analogy between the two, or perhaps they are the same personage in different social strata. This Doctor is particularly a man of medicine, which, however, does not hinder him from practising alchemy and the occult sciences. He is avaricious, egotistical and very weak in resisting his coarse and sensual appetites. When he goes to see a patient he chatters of anything but that patient's illness. He is interested in a thousand nothings, he touches everything, breaks vessels, feels the pulse of his patient as a matter of conscience, whilst discussing the talents of Columbine or the figure of Violetta. The dying man ends by falling asleep, worn out by the amorous exploits which form the subject of the chatter of this ignorant Doctor, with his rubicund nose, his inflamed cheeks and his gleaming eye. The patient having fallen asleep, the Doctor makes love to the waiting-woman, or plays the gallant towards the daughter or even the mistress of the house. There is no evidence that he has ever cured anybody with the exception of Polichinelle, who cannot die, and who once pretended to be ill so as to draw the Doctor to his house and there administer a sharp correction on the subject of a little rivalry in an affair of love or gluttony, the details of which have never been ascertained.

This type of ridiculous man of medicine has in all ages been a butt for satire. Thus in Athens long before Aristophanes,

the Doric comedians, as we have said in our introduction, attracted the crowd by the farces they performed on their trestles, and subsequently it was the character of the Doctor which afforded the greatest amusement by his gibberish, his muddles and his interminable periods, usually interrupted by the kicks of some other mime.

In *Arlequin Empereur dans la Lune* (1684) we are introduced into a garden where there is an enormous telescope employed by the Doctor to consult the stars. He leaves his instrument, and speaking the twofold language proper to him, he bids Pierrot be silent: "*E possibile, Pierò, che tu non voglia chetarti?* Tais-toi, je t'en prie!"

PIERROT. But, sir, how is it possible that I should be silent? I am not allowed a moment's rest. As long as the day lasts I am made to run after your daughter, your niece and your waiting-woman; whilst at night I am made to run after you? No sooner am I in bed than you begin: "Pierrot! Pierrot! Quick! Get up. Light the candle and give me my telescope. I want to go and observe the stars!" And you want me to believe that the moon is a world like ours! The moon! Hah! You'll drive me mad.

THE DOCTOR. Hold your tongue, Pierrot, or I will beat you.

PIERROT. Although you should kill me I must vent my feelings! I could never be such a fool as to agree that the moon is a world. The moon, the moon! Morbleu! And the moon no bigger than an omelette of eight eggs!

THE DOCTOR. You impertinent fellow! If you had ever so little understanding I should condescend to reason with you, but you are a fool, an ignorant animal, and you only know you have a head because you can feel it; so hold your tongue. Yet again I tell you, be silent! Tell me, have you noticed those

clouds that are to be seen round the moon? Those clouds are called crepuscules. Now it is those which I argue——

PIERROT. Let us hear.

THE DOCTOR. Now if there are crepuscules in the moon, it follows that there must be a generation and a corruption; if there is corruption and generation, it follows that there must be animals and vegetables; ergo, the moon is an inhabited world like this.

PIERROT. Ergo, as much as you like! But as far as I am concerned, *nego*; and this is how I prove it. You say that in the moon there are tres . . . cus . . . tres . . . pus . . . les trois pousse-culs.

THE DOCTOR. Crepuscules, and not pousse-culs, fool!

PIERROT. Anyhow, the three—you know what I mean; and you say that if there are three puscuscules it follows that there must be a generation and a corruption.

THE DOCTOR. Most certainly.

PIERROT. Now listen to Pierrot.

THE DOCTOR. Let us hear.

PIERROT. If there is a generation and a corruption in the moon it must follow that worms are born there. Now is it possible that the moon is worm-eaten? What do you say to that? Heh? By heaven it is unanswerable.

THE DOCTOR (*laughing*). Oh, assuredly not. Tell me, Pierrot, are not worms born in this world of ours?

PIERROT. Yes, sir.

THE DOCTOR. Does it follow thence that our world is worm-eaten?

PIERROT. There is something in that.

After this discussion on the moon, the Doctor informs Pierrot of his matrimonial plans for his daughter. Harlequin appears and so plagues Pierrot with questions that the latter answers the Doctor upon the matters raised by Harlequin. The Doctor, exasperated by the seeming impertinences of his servant, lets fly a buffet fit to break his teeth. Pierrot falls

down, picks himself up and goes off saying: "That is an effect of the moon."

In the *Gelosi* troupe, which went to France in 1572, the part of Doctor Graziano was played by Lucio Burchiella, an actor of great wit and liveliness, who was replaced in 1578 by Lodovico, of Bologna.

In the same year, 1572, Bernardino Lombardi went to France to play the rôles of Doctors in the *Confidenti* troupe. A clever poet as well as a distinguished actor, he published in Ferrara in 1583 *L'Alchemista*, a five-act comedy which was several times reprinted. You will find in it, as in most of the pieces of those days, various Italian dialects, Venetian, Bolognese and others.

Doctor Graziano Baloardo was played in the company of 1635 by Angelo Agostino Lolli, of Bologna. De Tralage speaks with praise of his manners. His comrades called him *the angel*, no doubt in consequence of his name of Angelo. He married the Signorina Adami, who played soubrettes in the same company. He died at an advanced age on the 29th August 1694.

In 1694 Marco-Antonio Romagnesi (Cinthio), having undertaken to perform old men, sometimes played Doctor under such Gallicized names as Bassinet.

In 1690, Giovanni Paghetti and Galeazzo Savorini were playing Doctors in Italy. Paghetti was also seen in France in the forain theatres.

In 1716 Francesco Matterazzi filled these rôles in the Regent's company, and at the same time Ganzachi and Luzi, of Venice, were performing them in the German improvising troupe of Vienna.

Other famous exponents of the character were Bonaventura Benozzi, brother of the celebrated Silvia, in 1732 ; and Pietro Antonio Veronese, son of Carlo Veronese (*Pantaloon*), in 1754.

iv

In the Neapolitan theatre there was a type which very greatly resembled in character and in costume the old men of the old Italian comedy in France, such as Pandolfo and Gerontio, who wore the same dress as the old men in the comedies of Molière. This type was called PANGRAZIO IL BISCEGLIESE, so named because he was a native of Bisceglia.

" It is necessary to know " (says M. Paul de Musset) " that Bisceglia is a little town of Apulia where a dialect is spoken which has the privilege of amusing Neapolitans however vaguely they may discern the accent. From time immemorial the character of Don Pangrazio in the theatre of San Carlino has been played by natives of Bisceglia or else by Neapolitans who know how to reproduce to perfection the speech of Apulia. Their *succès-de-ridicule* depends as much upon the accent as upon the talent of the actors, who, for the rest, are incomparable comedians. The public laughs with confidence from the moment that Pangrazio makes his appearance. The bills of the play never fail to add to the title of the piece these words, which constitute a particular attraction to the crowd : *Con Pangrazio biscegliese* (with Pangrazio of Bisceglia). The effect produced in our theatres by the dialects of our peasants cannot approach the wild laughter excited by this Pangrazio ; it would be necessary to go back to the days of Gros-Guillaume

and the Gascon Gentlemen to find an equivalent to this personage, who still sustains with the illustrious Pulcinella the national Commedia dell' Arte, that precious and charming tradition of which the booth of San Carlino is the last asylum. This feature of the popular taste is, however, a source of bitter and cruel injustice: the native of Bisceglia cannot show himself in Naples but that all the world bursts into laughter as soon as he utters a word; the tyranny of custom and of prejudice condemns him to the profession of buffoon; it were idle for him to become angry, for the only result would be that the laughter would grow still more unrestrained before an access of choler in a Biscegliese."

The particular merit of Pangrazio Biscegliese lies in the whining intonation of the dialect of his locality, and in the exhibition of the usual absurdities which provincials bring into a capital. The life of the great cities, the luxury, the costumes, the somewhat relaxed morals, cause him at every step to break into ejaculations of surprise. "We don't do that sort of thing at home," he says at every moment; or else: "At home there is not so much noise, there are not so many people to elbow us as here, but at least everybody knows everybody. Nor is your Naples as beautiful. I would that you could have seen Bisceglia built upon her rock. That now is a lovely country covered with rich villas and famous for her grapes and wines. You cannot say as much. And then in Bisceglia you don't see all this filth that is everywhere to be met in Naples. If I could but finish my business I should not be long in getting away from your noise, your fleas, your lazzaroni and your abandoned women." The native

of Bisceglia is very often right, but his criticisms under the ægis of his absurdities and his comical language pass for mere stupidity on his part.

Like Pantaloon he represents several provincial types, tradesmen, burgesses or old peasants; but fundamentally his character is always the same: rather miserly, credulous and easy to deceive.

His black velvet doublet and breeches are old fashioned. The sleeves of his coat and his cap are of red cloth, his stockings of red cotton. To-day Il Biscegliese whom the Neapolitans also call *Pangrazio Cucuzziello* (Pangrazio the Cuckold), has undergone a change of costume like most of the other Italian masks. He wears a red wig with a queue *en salsifis*, and an embroidered waistcoat of the days of Louis XV. which looks like a piece of tapestry. His coat and breeches are black, his stockings red and his shoes buckled.

Le Jettaturi, con Pangrazio Biscegliese is the title of a piece in which M. Paul de Musset shows us Il Biscegliese as he was to be seen on the stage of the San Carlino in Naples.

"The three knocks have been sounded. The little orchestra is playing the overture. At last the curtain rises and we see Don Pangrazio arriving laden with all his preservatives against ill-luck: the horns of a bull, coral hands, a rat made out of Vesuvian lava, a heart, the forks and the serpent. A burst of laughter greets his entrance according to custom. Whereupon he advances with a piteous air to the edge of the stage to take the public into his confidence on the score of his superstitious terrors.

"'Sirs,' he says, 'if I have forgotten anything let me know,

of your charity. These big horns which I carry, one under each arm, preserve my brow from a similar decoration. That, however, is not what most torments me; for Dame Pangrazio is incapable of wanting in fidelity to me. By turning this coral hand, whose index and little finger are extended towards folk of a suspicious countenance, I shall avoid pernicious influences. My outfit is complete, and I have been told that I might thus venture to show myself even in the streets of Toledo. I see with satisfaction that one is safe in Naples . . . a prudent man never runs any risks in this capital; nevertheless I am not quite easy. I have had an evil dream, and I am very anxious to return to Bisceglia.'

"Thereupon Don Pangrazio relates his dream, from which he draws all manner of prognostications. In fact all possible accidents happen in the one day to poor Pangrazio. Whilst he is rubbing up his amulets a thief steals his handkerchief, another his snuffbox, a third his watch. Pulcinella disguises himself as an usher to relate to him a false exploit. A wily girl pretends to mistake him for her lover who was carried off to Barbary by Corsairs; she embraces him and overwhelms him with her caresses. Pangrazio attempts to escape, when a cart knocks him over into the mud. He gets up furiously, cursing clumsy folk, thieves and the abandoned girls of Naples, whereupon two charming young men in yellow waistcoats with seals, gold chains and quizzing-glasses politely accost him, and assist him to cleanse himself of the mud. This happy encounter charms Il Biscegliese, who is in ecstasy with the fine manners and the politeness of the gentlemen of Naples. With their canes they knock upon the table of the

inn and command the waiter to serve Signor Pangrazio with the best and the most expensive in the house: sweetbreads and peas, Milanese fried cutlets, boiled eggs, beetroots and cucumber salad. To all this Pangrazio prefers the classical macaroni; he is served with a *rotolo*, which he consumes, eating it with his fingers. Meanwhile the two fashionable fellows dine and consume the more refined dishes which Il Biscegliese has declined; then they exchange a signal; they rise, take up their hats, overwhelm the other in salutations and depart. The old man finds it impossible to believe that he should again have fallen a victim to his credulity. With his bizarre conjectures upon the cause of the absence of the young men he amuses the public, and ends by paying the bill, not, of course, without a deal of haggling."

V

An old yellow wig showing the weft; and surmounted by a nightcap with a greasy ribbon, upon a bald head, whose red ears they barely conceal; two eyebrows shaggy and grey shading the little eyes so suspicious and mistrustful in their glances; a rubicund nose smeared with snuff; coarse fleshy lips gaping stupidly when their owner listens or watches what is happening about him; a short thick neck denoting a choleric irascible temperament; a prominent abdomen encased in a waistcoat that was erstwhile embroidered, and a pair of old red breeches; the whole enveloped in a make-believe dressing-gown, a soiled yellow rag which fifty years ago was plush; a pair of thick legs in woollen stockings, ending in feet of an abominable size and length, these thrust into shoes which

remind us of charcoal boats; a ponderous gait and a continual grumbling; and there you have CASSANDRO.

No one has risen yet; it is hardly day, and already Cassandro is complaining of the laziness of his servant and his daughter. So much the better, when all is said! He will have time in which to contemplate his money. Having taken a discreet pinch of snuff, from a box that creaks like a wheel in need of greasing, he slyly opens a hiding place known to himself alone; but a startled fly is on the wing, and Cassandro prudently shuts up his treasure once more. Next it is his servant, Pierrot, asleep on his feet, who blind and yawning comes to strike his head against his master, crushing underfoot Cassandro's corns and bunions ill-protected by the enormous shoes. A splendid kick administered to Pierrot, who responds at hazard by a buffet which never misses the face of his master, is the affair of a moment.

Pierrot recognises his mistake and repents his precipitancy. He begs pardon of his good master and all is forgotten. "It is already light," says Cassandro, "and I must go out; bring me my things and particularly my spectacles which I left in my room. Be quick!" Cassandro is no longer alone, therefore he must pretend in the presence of others to be deaf and short-sighted—an old ruse, but an unfailing one.

Whilst recommending his servant not to cook anything for breakfast and to lock the door upon his daughter, he assumes his fine coat. He takes his looped hat, his cane with its ivory head, his green gloves, his colossal watch, which himself he has mended to avoid useless expenditure. The movement of this watch of his makes such a tic-toc that when he passes in the street the neighbours, attracted by the noise, come to the

thresholds of their shops and say : " There is Messer Cassandro. Where is he going ? " " To see his mistress," reply the wits.

To behold him as he comes adown the street you might be moved, notwithstanding his dashing toilet, to give him alms ; and, what is worse, he would accept them. Nevertheless he is the richest man in this parish, just as he is the most miserly. There is nothing that he will not do for money. He would even give his daughter to Polichinelle. He considers him, however, somewhat debauched, and prefers Leandro, the hidalgo, the man of wealth, the pretty fellow. It is at the house of this prospective son-in-law that he goes to seek a breakfast, to avoid, so he says, giving trouble to his servants. " And then," he adds, " we shall be better able to talk over our little affairs at table."

Meanwhile what is happening at his home ? His daughter Columbine has employed her charms to corrupt Pierrot ; she has added to them a venison pasty and a bottle of old wine which have put to sleep all the scruples of her gaoler, and she abandons herself to mirth and dancing with her lover, Harlequin.

It rarely happens that Cassandro does not return at this moment, accompanied by his amphitryon, who struts like a cock and is laden with gifts for the seductive Columbine. Thereupon the lovers take flight. Columbine is to be sacrificed ; but Harlequin, protected by a fairy whose talisman he saved, holds his own against Cassandro, and battles in point of wealth with Leandro. Cassandro does not hesitate. The richer of the twain shall have his daughter, his little doll ; and as the treasures of fairies are inexhaustible, Leandro defeated, retires in a fury, reproaching the old man with his

lack of faith. Cassandro shrugs his shoulders, laughs in his sleeve, and blesses the lovers.

The character of Cassandro was created in 1580, in the *Gelosi* company, under the name of Cassandro *da Sienna.* His were the parts of the serious fathers, whilst Pantaloon, in the same complicated intrigues, presented, together with the Doctor, the absurd personages, the jealous husband, betrayed, beaten and contented. This character of Cassandro disappeared from the Italian scenarii for more than a century, and it was only in 1732 that Périer revived the name to perform under it the rôles of ridiculous father in the forain theatres. He was imitated by Desjardins, in 1736, and Garnier, in 1739. On the Franco-Italian scene, Robert des Brosses, a native of Bonn, in Germany, who had joined the theatre as a musician in the orchestra, made his first appearance on the stage in 1744 in this rôle. This actor, estimable for his character and his talents, added musical composition to his other gifts. He wrote the music of a great number of ballets and comic operas.

In 1780, Rozière was playing the same parts in the Théâtre-Italien. But the most famous of all Cassandri was Chapelle, whose credulity and naïveté were proverbial in the theatre. Chapelle was short and fat; his eyes, which were continually blinking, were crowned by thick, black eyebrows; his mouth, always agape, lent him a stupid air. His legs resembled those of an elephant. If you will add to all this a clumsy, heavy shape, you will have some notion of Chapelle. One might imagine that Nature, beholding him after she had made him, said to him: "I aimed at making you a man, I have made you a Cassandro; forgive me, Chapelle."

It was to Chapelle that the elder Seveste related on his return from a tour in Normandy the story of how, during his sojourn in Rouen, he had educated a carp, which followed him everywhere like a dog, but that unfortunately he had just lost it, at which he was very much troubled.

"And how did you lose this carp?" inquired Chapelle.

"Mon Dieu!" said Seveste, "I was so imprudent as to take it with me one night to the theatre. A terrible storm came on after the show. My carp followed me without trouble down to the street, but there the poor beast was drowned in attempting to leap across the gutter."

"How unfortunate," said Chapelle; "I thought that carp were able to swim like fish."

People had made him believe so many things that during the last years of his life he had become so mistrustful and sceptical that when one of the theatre boys would say to him: "You are to play to-morrow," he would reply: "Be off with you; I am not to be taken in!" Whenever he was asked how he fared, he would turn his back upon the inquirer, saying: "That is not true." Chapelle, who added the trade of grocer to the profession of actor, retired in 1816, and went to live with an uncle, who was a canon in Versailles. He died at Chartres in January, 1824.

vi

The Romans have a type called Cassandrino, who is the same as their Pasquale. He is a worthy citizen of Rome, of a ripening age of some fifty years or so, but still young in his ways: agile, sedulously curled and powdered, his linen always

irreproachable, his white stockings immaculate, his silver-buckled shoes well lacquered. He wears a light three-cornered hat; his coat and breeches are of fine red cloth which throws into relief his spangled white satin wasitcoat, with its ample skirts. In character he is charming; he is never angry whatever betide, and he turns a deaf ear upon all jests at his expense. Courteous, well-bred, astute and witty, it is not difficult to perceive in this type the personification of one of the handsome curial *Monsignori*.

"Yesterday, towards nine o'clock" (says the author of the *Chartreuse de Parme*), "I was issuing from those magnificent rooms overlooking a garden full of orange-trees, known as the Café Rospoli, opposite the Fiano Palace. A man at the door of a sort of cave was saying: '*Entrate, o signori!* Enter, sirs, we are about to begin.' I obtained admission to this little theatre for the sum of twenty-eight centisimi, a price which made me fear low company and fleas. I was soon reassured. I had for neighbours some worthy citizens of Rome. . . . The Romans are, perhaps, of all the people of Europe, those who most love and are quickest to perceive fine shades of satire. The theatrical censorship in Rome is more meticulous than in Paris, and consequently nothing can be more flat than the comedies performed there. Laughter has been driven to seek refuge with the marionettes, where pieces more or less improvised are presented. I spent an extremely pleasant evening at the Fiano Palace. The theatre upon which the actors parade their little persons may be some ten feet wide and some four feet high. The mounting is excellent, and carefully calculated to suit actors who are twelve inches tall.

The fashionable personage among the people of Rome is Cassandrino, a coquettish old gentleman of some fifty-five to sixty years of age, quick, agile, his white hair very carefully powdered, well groomed, and in general more or less like a cardinal. Moreover Cassandrino is trained in affairs and polished by rubbing shoulders with the great world ; he would in truth be an accomplished man but for his weakness of falling regularly in love with all the women whom he meets. You will agree that such a character is extremely well invented in a country governed by an oligarchic court, composed of celibates, where the power is in the hands of age. It goes without saying that Cassandrino is secular ; but I will wager that in all the auditorium there is not a single spectator who does not in his mind invest him with the red skull-cap of a cardinal, or at least with the violet stockings of a *monsignore*. The *monsignori* are, as is known, young men of the pope's court, the auditors of this country ; their rank is a step which leads to all the others. Rome is full of *monsignori* of the age of Cassandrino, who have failed to make their fortune, and who seek what consolation they can find whilst awaiting the red hat."

M. Frédéric Mercey gives us in his *Théâtre en Italie* several accounts of the pieces which were performed at the Fiano Theatre : *Il Viaggio a Civita-Vecchia, Cassandrino Dilettante, Cassandrino Impresario*, etc.

In 1840 this theatre was directed and worked by a jeweller of the Corso who, by a curious chance, was homonymous with the hero of his improvisations—Signor Cassandro.

PANTALOON

vii

The spirit of Venetian mischief and Venetian quaintness appears to be personified in the mask of FACANAPPA, the leading character in the marionette troupes. His success in Venice is equal to that of the Biscegliese in Naples. The bills never fail to indicate that he is included in the piece; it is *Harlequin the Bankrupt, with Facanappa*; *Pantaloon the Grocer, with Facanappa*, etc., etc. His every entrance is greeted with applause and anticipatory thrills of mirth. It is he who comes to notify the public of changes made during the performance, and who at the final curtain comes forward again to announce the pieces of the morrow, which, as usual, are *with Facanappa*. His is the privilege of saying everything he pleases, and he is not backward in making numerous allusions, employing the most current words in his Venetian dialect, and manufacturing new ones when the need arises.

A long parakeet nose, surmounted by a pair of green spectacles like those of Tartaglia, a flat wide-brimmed hat, a red cravat, an enormous waistcoat with tinsel buttons and a long white coat, the tails of which trail along the ground—such is the appearance of this personage, whose offices are very varied, but whose character at bottom seems to be that a sort of Venetian *Monsieur Prud'homme*.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century this type bore the name of Bernardone. In 1705, the actor Leinhaus played in the improvising company of Venice the rôles of ridiculous parents under this name, with a Venetian accent, so as to be as reminiscent as possible of the classical Pantaloon.

Zanobio is another type of old man of the same sort, but dating back to the fifteenth century. This personage parodied the citizens of Piombino, and his rôle was extremely characteristic. In the *Gelosi* troupe, which played in Florence in 1578, Girolamo Salimbeni, a Florentine, was engaged by Flaminio Scala exclusively for this character.

viii

There existed once in Palermo a national theatre, like that of Naples, but with types that were entirely different. Thus the father of the family, the Baron (Il Barone), a Sicilian lord, the dupe of his servants and his daughter, was the personification of the nobility of the land, and of the bourgeoisie aiming at aristocratic distinctions. It is not known whether Lappaio and his successor Pasquinio, two famous Sicilian actors, preserved this type, but down to the latter half of the nineteenth century there were still no Sicilian marionette pieces that did not include the Baron.

ix

Under the name of Fleschelles in serious rôles, and under that of Gaultier-Garguille in farces, Hugues Guéru, who was born in Normandy, played the parts of father and of old man, at first in the Théâtre du Marais in 1588, and later at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

His name, Gaultier-Garguille, is derived from *gaultier*, meaning *bon vivant*, from the old French verb *gaudir* (to

rejoice or to enjoy) and from *garguille* which means *gargoyle* or wide-throat. Guéru married the daughter of Tabarin somewhere about 1620. He must then have been at least fifty years of age (he was of the same age as his father-in-law), whilst his wife was very young and very wealthy. After the death of Gaultier-Garguille she was able, through her own wealth and that bequeathed her by her husband, to marry a gentleman of Normandy. Gaultier was a good and worthy husband, and in fine weather he would leave his house in the Rue Pavée-Saint-Sauveur to repair to his country villa, near the Porte Montmartre, there to live as a *franc bourgeois*.

He was lean of body, long of leg, and broad of face. He wore a greenish demi-mask with a long nose and cat's whiskers; his hair was stiff and white, his beard pointed like that of Pantaloon, his breeches and shoes were black, and he wore a black doublet with red sleeves; he was equipped with a pouch, a dagger and a cane.

In 1622, the Hôtel de Bourgogne was in the apogee of its success. The best farces performed were, according to the critics of the day: *La Malle de Gaultier*, *Le Cadet de Champagne*, *Tire la Corde*, *J'ai la Carpe*, *Mieux que Devant*, *La Farce Joyeuse de Maistre Mimin*, etc.

Gaultier-Garguille enjoyed in particular a great reputation as a singer of absurdities, and somewhere about 1630 a collection of songs was published, mostly of an obscene character, approved by Turlupin and Gros-Guillaume. Hugues Guéru died in 1633.

He was replaced after his death by Jacquemin Jadot, who, however, never reached the level of Gaultier-Garguille.

x

In the French company at the theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1634, Guillot-Gorju was the personification of the Doctor. The part was played by Bertrand Haudouin de Saint-Jacques who, according to Guy-Patin, had been dean of the faculty of medicine. He played for eight years at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, then withdrew and went to Melun, where he resumed his medical profession. But, seized with melancholy, he returned to the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

"He was a big man, dark and very ugly: his eyes were sunken and his nose resembled a trumpet, and although in general appearance he was not unlike an ape and there was absolutely no necessity for him to wear a mask in the theatre, he nevertheless never appeared without one."

Doctor Guillot-Gorju was dressed from head to foot in black. He wore the ancient costume of the time of Henri IV. The doublet buttoned to the chin, trunks like a pair of melons and tight stockings; he wore two garters on his left leg, one above and the other below the knee.

He died in 1643 at the age of fifty.

IX

THE CANTATRICE

It was the custom of the Greeks to sing all their poetry and they gave no theatrical pieces that were not sung and accompanied by instruments.

"In Homeric days," says M. Charles Magnin, "the singers went about like the troubadours in the Middle Ages, celebrating the exploits of heroes in festivals, in public assemblies and in the palaces of kings, and always preferring the very latest songs."

Thespis, in the scenarii which he composed, caused his songs to be sung by a chorus; this, for instance, was the case with the songs to Bacchus and Silenus in the scenarii entitled *The Vintage*. Thereafter the actors would declaim. He was the first to draw from the chorus a solo singer who was known as a *corypheus*. Æschylus added a second singer, and when Terpander had introduced lyre accompaniments for the songs the foundations of opera were laid.

The Latins failed to develop that taste and fashion for music which had characterised the Greeks. With them songs and accompaniments were things apart from poetry. We know that the Atellanæ were composed of farces, pantomimes, dances and music. Many of their plays must greatly have resembled our modern comic operas or, rather perhaps, those

pieces which once were called *interludes* in Italy, and are known to-day as *opera buffa*. In antiquity this name of *interlude* was given to all pieces that were played or sung during the intervals in the main performance. The tragic or comic chori would come upon the proscenium between every two acts. Little by little these chori were replaced by mimes, buffoons or dancers, and then by short pieces mingled with songs to sustain the patience of the spectators during the wait.

"After the fashion of the ancients," says M. Castil-Blaze, in his *Histoire de l'Opéra Italienne*, "who brought on the chorus during the entr'actes of their dramas, the Italians gave madrigals and songs to fill up the same spaces. These interludes, unconnected by any dialogue, did not long retain the suffrages of the public. *La Flora* by Alamanni, *Il Granchio* by Salviati, and *La Cofanaria* by Ambra, which were performed and published in Florence in 1566, with the concert interludes written by Lori, Nerli and Cini for these gay comedies, led the public to exact something better. *Il Mogliazzo* and *La Cattrina* (*atto scenico rusticale*), by Francesco Berni, produced in Florence in 1566 were extremely successful because a remarkable dramatic action with two or three characters was unfolded in these harmonious interludes. This was the dawn of the *opera buffa*, a happy prelude to the *Gallina Perduta* of Francesco Escolani, which soon took Italy by storm, and to *La Serva Padrona* which was greeted with enthusiasm, by the whole of Europe."

The Président de Brosses, writing of this little masterpiece of Pergolese's, says :

"There are a male and a female buffoon who play a farce in the entr'actes in a manner so natural, and with an expression so comical, that it is impossible to conceive the like. It is not true that it is possible to die of laughter, for if so I should now be dead, notwithstanding that the pain I experienced in the expansion of my spleen hindered me from hearing as well as I desired the celestial music of this farce."

In the nineteenth century, between the lowering and raising of the curtain, the entr'acte existed in all its tiresomeness. The boredom begotten of these long waits was frequently a source of ill-will on the part of the public, who spent half the evening yawning. It was necessary that a piece should be very good to survive these entr'actes. It was generally deplored in France that the custom of filling these gaps as in the eighteenth century should have passed from fashion. It was in these interludes that the Italians showed, more even than in their dramas and tragedies, how great they are as composers, as actors, as mimes and as singers.

"The Italians" (says the Président de Brosses) "have cultivated a taste for the theatre which is above that of any other nation; and as they are no less gifted in the matter of music, they never divorce the one from the other; thus most often tragedy, comedy and farce are all opera in Italy."

The first *opera buffa* was performed in Rome at the beginning of the sixteenth century on the occasion of the fêtes given by Giuliano de' Medici, the brother of Leo X. The comedy of Plautus, *Pœnulus*, was set to music and performed on two

consecutive days in an immense theatre expressly built in the square of the Capitol.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were no pieces, whether scenarii for improvisors or fully written plays, that did not conclude with dancing or singing, either of a popular character or else drawn from tragedies set to music by such famous composers as Peri, Crosi, Monteverde, Soriano, Emilio del Cavaliere, Marco Antonio Cesti and Giovanelli, Cavalli; these did then for the theatre what was done in the following century by Scarlatti, Pergolese, Jomelli, Piccinni, Paesiello, Cimarosa, and, in the nineteenth century, by Cherubini, Rossini, etc.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century—in 1526—La Barbera created a sensation in Italy. She was a Florentine, and she travelled from city to city at her own charges, accompanied by a chorus, with the support of which she gave those interludes, for which the taste amounted then to a veritable passion. Macchiavelli has a deal to say of her in his letters. "La Barbera should be at this moment in Modena," he writes to Guicciardini, at the end of a long political letter, "and if you can serve her in any way I recommend her to you, for she engages my thoughts a deal more than does the emperor."

Florence, Turin, Venice, Bologna, Rome and Naples were the first cities in which the Italian opera was established, and in which fame was achieved for the beauty of their voices by the *Signore* Catarina Martinella, Franceschina Caccini, Giulia and Vittoria Lulle, La Moretti, Adriana Baroni, Checca della Laguna, Margherita Costa, Petronilla Massimi, and Francesca Manzoni. All these *virtuose*, in addition to being singers, were actresses and performers upon several instruments: for in the *Farsa* or *Festa Teatrale* of Jacopo Sannazaro, performed in

Naples at the palace of the Prince of Calabria, in 1492, an actress representing Joy sang, to her own accompaniment on a viol, whilst her three followers played the flute, the fiddle and the pipe. This custom of combining talents and of a singer's sometimes being his or her own accompanist, continued in Italy down to the end of the eighteenth century.

The greater part of these operas were intermingled with improvised scenes, and farces performed by the characters of the Commedia dell' Arte. In *L'Anfiparnasso*—a harmonic opera by Orazio Vecchi, performed in Modena in 1594—Brighella, Pantaloon, a lackey named Pirolino, and the Captain, move as freely as in their own improvised farces.

"Pantaloon calls Pirolino. The greedy servant answers him from afar with his mouth full. Pantaloon cries: 'Holla, Pirolino! Where are you then? Pirolino! Pirolino! Ah! thief, what are you doing in the kitchen?' 'I am filling my stomach with birds,' says Pirolino, 'with birds which used to sing: *Pipiripi! cucurucu!*'"

On the 14th December 1645, Cardinal Mazarin commanded a performance to be given in Paris at the Petit-Bourbon Theatre, of *La Finta Pazza* of Giulio Strozzi, with music by Francesco Socrati, and machinery by Torelli.

Margarita Bartolazzi was the CANTATRICE in this troupe. Her voice, says a contemporary author, was so charming that it would be impossible worthily to praise her.

Luigia Gabriella Locatelli and Giulia Gabrielli were also included as Cantatrices in this same company, which continued its performances down to 1652.

In 1658, at the Petit-Bourbon, a great performance was held

of *La Rosaura*, a lyric tragedy by Antonio Arcoleo, with music by Antonio Perti, originally given in Venice. The interludes were filled by Fiurelli (Scaramouche).

The word *opera* was then used in its true sense of "work." It was customary to say *opera musicale, opera tragica, sacra, comica, scenica, armonica*, etc. Works such as *La Rosaura, Orfeo, Ercole Amante* and *Serse* were announced with the word *Machines* at the head of the bill, and the room in the Louvre where these Italian operas were performed bore the name of the *Salle des Machines*. The opera *Serse* (Xerxes), first given in November, 1660, was so long that it took more than eight hours to perform.

The players in this piece were Signora Anna Bergerotti, Signor Melone, who was an abbé, and who played feminine rôles, Bordignone, Atto, Tagliavacca, Zanetto, Chiarini, Piccinni, Assalone, Rivani and Augustino.

In the interludes, "Scaramouche (Tiberio Fiurelli) appeared in disguise, and danced between two Doctors; he was recognised by his companions, Trivelino and Pulcinella, who stripped and beat him."

To the company of Italian singers Louis XIV. united for these performances that of the Italian buffoons as well as the French dancers and musical performers. Of these royal fantasies were soon born the French opera and the permanent installations of the French and Italian comedies.

After the demolition of the Petit-Bourbon, Louis XIV. lent the hall of the Palais-Royal to Molière and to the troupe of Italian comedians who also sang, but whose singing was confined to couplets.

In Gherardi's collection we see that at the end of the seven-

teenth century some of the airs fitted to the comedies are Italian and others French. They are mostly melodies drawn from the old Italian operas of the beginning of the century, and from French rigadoons and Italian couplets, many of which have a deal of *maestria*. In the case of some pieces, however, like *Les Originaux* (1693), the music of which was written by M. Masse, the airs were specially composed for the occasion.

The rôle of La Chanteuse or Cantatrice was really a very limited one and demanded no more than a pretty voice and a pretty face. Such attributes were supplied by Elisabeth Danneret, known then under the name of *Babet la Chanteuse*, who made her début at the Italian comedy on 8th July 1694, in *La Fontaine de Sapience*. She was short of stature, but extremely well made and very pretty. Her duties consisted in appearing dressed as a shepherdess—as shepherdesses were dreamed of in those days—to proffer a cup of a miraculous water whilst singing :

" Qui goûte de ces eaux ne peut pas plus se méprendre
Quand l'amour lui demande un choix ;
Buvons-en mille et mille fois ;
Quand on prend de l'amour, on n'en saurait trop prendre."

And, at the end of the piece, when shepherds and shepherdesses have chosen one another with *sapience* and are dancing together, the cantatrice shepherdess returns, and sings :

" Amanti, ci vuole costanza in amor',
Amando,
Penando,
Si speri, si, si ;
Che basta sol un di,
Un' hor', un momento,
Per render contento
Un misero cuor'."

In *Le Départ des Comédiens* (1694), Gherardi, as Harlequin, says to the Doctor : " As for you, sir, you are going to live on your rents. I should like to associate myself with you, but it is forbidden to an Italian comedian to go into retirement before the age of a hundred and twenty, and it was only out of kindness that Scaramouche was permitted to retire at ninety-four."

Then, turning to Babet : " And you, mademoiselle, what are you going to do ? " he would inquire. Babet answered him in song :

" Quand une fille,
Jeune et gentille,
Voudra,
Bientôt elle parviendra.
J'en connais une,
Que la fortune
Jusques aux cieux élèvera . . .
Dans un nuage, à l'Opéra."

Babet hardly realised the truth of the fiction which she sang. After the death of Gherardi, with whom she had lived as a wife, and by whom she had had a son, she did indeed join the opera.

Sometimes Babet was dressed as a sibyl, as an ancient priestess, as Bellona, the goddess of war, as a Naïad, as an Egyptian, etc.

Some wits on the subject of the Cantatrice announced that an abbé formed part of the new company in the capacity of almoner. " They have a Cantatrice, a Doctor and an Almoner ; therefore the company is complete." We do not know whether an abbé did indeed accompany the comedians, but if so that would not have been the first case of its kind

in an Italian troupe. The Italians frequently mingled religious practices with the most profane things. The first register of the new troupe was conceived as follows :—

" In the name of God, of the Virgin Mary, of Saint Francis, of Paul, and of the souls in Purgatory, we start our performances on this eighteenth of May, 1716, with *L'Inganno Fortunato*."

A story related by the Président de Brosses, in speaking of a performance in the amphitheatre of Verona, in 1740, is no less curious.

" Let me not forget to tell you of a singular surprise I experienced at the comedy, on the first occasion that I went there. A bell in the city having sounded, there was so sudden a movement about me that I thought the amphitheatre was tumbling into ruins, particularly as I saw that the actresses were running away, and one of them notwithstanding that at the moment, in accordance with the prescriptions of her rôle, she was in a swoon. The real cause of all this was that the *Angelus* had just sounded, and that the whole assembly had knelt down facing the East, whilst the actors vanished into the wings and an *Ave Maria* was sung. After this, the swooning actress returned, very properly performed the usual obeisance after the *Angelus*, resumed her condition of unconsciousness, and the piece continued."

In the performance of the company of 1716 we find *Les Stratagèmes*, music by Plagliardi (1716); *Alcyone*, a parody (1741), music by M. Blaise; *La Serva Padrona* (1756), music by Pergolese. Other musical composers of the Italian comedy

were: Tarade, Kohot, Philidor, Gibert, Sodi, Monsigni, Chardini, Lamette, Duni, Clément, Grétry, Le Chevalier d'Herbain, Bambini, Gossec, Garnier, Desbrosses, etc.

Rosalia Astraudi made her début on the 30th April 1744. She was eleven years of age at the time, and she was engaged to sing in parodies and interludes, to play lovers and soubrettes and to dance in the ballet. She discharged all these offices to the satisfaction of the public, married a nobleman, and left the theatre in 1755.

Justine-Benoîte du Ronceray, known as Mademoiselle Chantilly, born at Avignon in 1727, was the daughter of Du Ronceray, sometime musician of the chapel of the King of France, and later choir-master to Stanislas, King of Poland. In 1744 she was a dancer in the service of this monarch, when she obtained leave to visit France, accompanied by her mother, Claudine Bied, who was also in the employ of the King of Poland as a musician. She made her début in the theatre of the Opéra-Comique at the fair of Saint-Laurent, under the management of Favart. Favart fell seriously in love with her, and married her at the end of that year. He was summoned later on by the Maréchal de Saxe, to undertake the management of the theatre which was to follow the French army into the Low Countries.

The marshal's camp was never without its comic opera. It was from its stage that the battle orders were issued. In the interval between two pieces the principal actress—a part long filled by Madame Favart—would come to make such an announcement as: "Gentlemen, there will be no performance to-morrow as M. le Maréchal is delivering battle. On the next day we shall give *Le Coq du Village*, *Les Amours Grivois*."

THE CANTATRICE

From principles both of taste and of system, the Maréchal de Saxe insisted upon gaiety in his armies. He said that the French never conducted themselves so well as when they were gaily led, and that what they most feared in time of war was boredom. Mademoiselle Chantilly, therefore, followed her husband to headquarters in Brussels. It was there that the Maréchal de Saxe fell in love with her (1746).

"Mademoiselle de Chantilly" (he wrote one day), "I take my leave of you. You are a more dangerous enchantress than the lady Armida. Now as Pierrot, now as Love, now as a simple shepherdess, you bear yourself so charmingly that you enchant us all. I, too, have beheld myself at the point of succumbing, I whose sinister art affrights the universe. What a triumph for you had you been able to subject me to your laws! I am grateful to you for not having exerted all your arts. For a young sorceress you contrive very well with your crook, which is no less, I think, than the wand by which that poor Prince Renaud was stricken. Already I have beheld myself surrounded by blossoms and petals, sinister equipment for a favourite of Mars. I tremble to think of it. And what would the King of France and Navarre have said if he had found me grasping a garland instead of the torch of vengeance? Notwithstanding the danger to which you have exposed me, I cannot bear you any grudge for my error; it is charming! But it is only by flight that so great a peril is to be eluded:

"Adieu, divinité du parterre adorée;
Faites le bien d'un seul et les désirs de tous;
Et puissent vos amours égaler la durée
De la tendre amitié que mon cœur a pour vous!"

"Forgive, Mademoiselle, this rhymed prose which your talents inspire from the lingering remains of my intoxication; the liquor I have drunk lasts, it is said, often longer than we think.

"MAURICE DE SAXE."

Madame Favart made her début at the Comédie-Italienne on the 5th August 1749. "There is no other instance of so great a success." Grimm says that her celebrity was the result of the passion she had inspired in the hero of Fontenoy.

Her talents were variously appreciated. She had, we are assured, a frank and natural gaiety, an agreeable and piquant manner. Fitted for any character, she rendered all with a surprising truth: soubrettes, leading ladies, peasant girls, naïve parts, character parts, she made them all her own; in a word, she could multiply herself without end, and audiences were amazed to see her play on the same day, in four several pieces, four entirely different rôles. She was able so perfectly to imitate the various dialects that people whose accent she borrowed imagined her their compatriot.

"We emphatically assert," wrote the brothers Parfait, in 1769, "notwithstanding the sentiments of those who are always greedy of novelty, that this amiable actress has not yet been equalled in these rôles; and to convince all who might doubt it there is no need to do more than to send them to witness the first performance of *La Fée Urgèle*, which is about to be given."

In June of 1771 the first symptoms of the disease that was

to kill her made their appearance; and although she was well aware of her desperate case she continued to play until the end of the same year, out of interest for her comrades. Of her death in 1772 Grimm wrote as follows, very harshly disparaging her talents:—

"The theatre of the Comédie-Italienne has just lost a celebrated actress in Madame Favart. Throughout all her protracted sufferings she showed a great deal of fortitude and patience. Upon recovering one day from a long swoon she perceived, among those whom her danger had hastily brought about her, one of her neighbours in grotesque accoutrements. She smiled, and said that she had thought to behold the Clown of Death (*le Paillasse de la Mort*)—a jest full of character from the lips of a dying actress. The priests were never able to induce her to renounce the theatre. She said that she would not be forsworn; that the theatre was her state; that if she were to recover she would be compelled to play again, and that consequently it was impossible for her to renounce her profession in good faith; she preferred to die without the sacraments. When, however, she felt herself to be expiring she exclaimed: '*Oh! pour le coup, j'y renonce.*' Those were her last words. Madame Favart was somewhere about fifty years of age. She was a bad actress. Her voice was harsh and her manner coarse and ignoble. She was only endurable in exaggerated characters and not long in those; she was very superior in the part of the *Savoyard Montrant la Marmotte*: that was her great talent, and it made her fortune in the theatre at the time of her début in 1749. She was then called Mademoiselle de Chantilly; she danced

and sang and her dancing sabots turned the head of all Paris."

Between August 1752 and March 1754, Monelli, Guerrieri, Lazzari and the Signore Anna Tonelli, Catarina Tonelli and Rosa Lazzari were seen as singers on the stage of the Comédie-Italienne. They presented Pergolese's *La Serva Padrona*, *Il Maestro di Musica* by Scarlatti, *Serpilla et Bajocco* by Ristorini, and other interludes set to music by Cocchi, Selleti, Rinaldo di Capua, Latilla, Jomelli, Ciampi and Leo. As these Italians sang only in *opera buffa*, the name of *buffoons* came to be given them. Hence it is that still to-day we speak of *buffi* in the Italian companies, although there is usually nothing of the buffoon in their performances.

In the middle of the eighteenth century war was declared between French music and Italian music. French music, with the King and Madame de Pompadour at its head, carried the day. The Italian singers quitted Paris, but the Comédie-Italienne seized upon their repertory, appropriated subjects and music, and translated all their pieces, such, for instance, as *La Serva Padrona*, which became a French comic opera under the title of *La Servante Maitresse.*

Laruette, Rochard, Bouret, Mesdames Favart, Rosalie Astraudi, Foulquier (*Catinon*), and Superville sang in French, and bolstered up the weakness of their singing by the liveliness and dash of their performances. This was the true cause of the failure in Paris of the Signora Deamicis on the 20th June 1758, when she made an attempt to restore to the esteem of the French public the Italian music which five years before had yielded so many comic operas.

After only one performance lasting four hours, and consisting of *La Serva Padrona* and *Gli Raggieri della Femina Scaltra*, the Signora Deamicis and her father understood that further efforts would be useless. She crossed to England, where she abandoned the line of *prima comica* and took up the serious music of Bach.

Mademoiselle Foulquier made her first appearance in 1753, in the rôles of Angélique, and was seen later on in those of Silvia. She added to circumspection of behaviour and natural graces in singing and in declamation, a superlative degree of talent as a dancer. Her elder sister, Madame Bognoli, was seen as Silvia in 1758.

On the 6th May 1761, Mademoiselle Piccinelli made her début as an Italian Cantatrice. Favart, in a letter to the Count of Durazzo, relates as follows the history of Mademoiselle Piccinelli :—

"Here is what is said: One day a poor village woman found a new-born child abandoned in a field; this was our Signora. The peasant woman took charge of her out of charity, fostered her, and brought her up as best she could as her own child until the age of eight. Then one of those women who seek in the youth and beauty of members of their own sex a means to their own fortunes chanced to pass through the village, saw the little one, was impressed by her natural graces, and proposed her purchase for a moderate sum. The bargain was concluded. This third mother spared nothing to give her adopted daughter an education suitable to the state of life which she had in view for her. The child profited beyond all the hopes that had been enter-

tained. Already the *matrone* entertained visions of fortune; she caused the girl to enter the theatre; she arranged to procure for her an opulent protector; but the young actress, whose tastes did not incline to these dispositions, decided to choose for herself. This of course was opposed. To the end that she might have peace, the girl then left her third mother and voluntarily placed herself under the protection of another adoptive one, so that she might appear becomingly in the world; this last conducted her to Paris. There Mademoiselle Piccinelli was well received at the Comédie-Italienne, and her success was everywhere proclaimed. Thereupon the various mothers of the cantatrice sought her out and each one claimed her. The first one said: 'She is mine, I gave her life.' The second one said: 'I saved that life; I fostered her; she belongs to me.' The third one: 'I bought her; I educated her; who can dispute my rights?' The fourth one added: 'She gave herself freely to me, and I am working daily to make her fortune, which is the best claim of all. I will tear out the eyes of any one of you that disputes her with me.' Our Cantatrice, to make the peace amongst them, gave an equal sum of money to each. The first three withdrew; the fourth remained with her as her counsellor. La Piccinelli, fatigued by these little family vexations, ended by renouncing all her mothers, and placed herself under the authority of a husband. She chose M. Vezian, the brother of a very pretty girl who was with us at the Comédie-Italienne, and to whom he owes the considerable position which he fills."

Mademoiselle Piccinelli added to a charming presence "a voice of great range and flexibility, of a silvery and pleasant

timbre. She was able to please French ears. With this gift she combined that of playing comedy with great nobility."

Mademoiselle Collet made her début on the 21st January 1721, in *La Fille Mal Gardée.*

"Her infantile performances obtained her the applause of the public, which was redoubled when she was seen in the rôle of Betzi in *Le Roi et le Fermier.* These are about the only characters in which she achieved distinction. Her voice was poor, and she replaced by mannerisms what she lacked in expression."

In 1762, Signorina Colomba, a Venetian, successfully made her début at the Comédie-Italienne in Paris. An Englishman fell in love with her and attempted to carry her off. She left the theatre to escape from him, and did not return to it until 1772.

"Her début was of the most brilliant," says Grimm in his correspondence. "She is no longer in her first youth; at least she has the air of being about thirty years of age. Her only fault is that she is invested with too much nobility and too much beauty for the rôles of comic opera; her carriage, her walk, her air, are those of a queen. Her glance is august, noble and tender; her great eyes, the most beautiful in the world, seem to suggest that the proper place for her is tragedy. Her play is not without mannerisms, but they are mannerisms that are pleasing. . . . She has a charming voice, and an excellent way of singing, full of that grace, sweetness and facility which French singers can never achieve. Speaking for myself, this is the first, and perhaps the last time that I have

heard anyone sing in a Parisian theatre with such ravishing charm and grace."

The Italian comedians, to repair the loss which they suffered in the retirement of Mademoiselle Piccinelli, and the death of Madame Savi—who had made her début in 1760 in the parts of leading lady—charged Colalto, who played Pantaloon parts, to go to Italy to find two actresses. He left in April of 1766 and returned in August with the Signore Zanarini and Bacelli, mother and daughter. They made their début as first and second ladies in *Gli Amori d'Arlequino* of Goldoni. Those who understood Italian applauded them heartily, especially the mother; the others withdrew but indifferently satisfied. Madame Zanarini was engaged to play leading rôles, and her daughter, Mademoiselle Bacelli, for those of soubrettes.

In 1770 Paris received Mademoiselle Mesnard, a young and pretty Cantatrice, who had begun life as a shopkeeper and then entered the theatre under the protection of the Duke of Chaulnes, who had her portrait painted by Greuze. It was she who was the mistress of Beaumarchais, and the cause of that scandalous rough-and-tumble between the "duc et pair crocheteur" and the author of *Figaro*. We know that, as a consequence of this affair, Beaumarchais, although acquitted by the tribunal of the Marshals of France, which had sent M. de Chaulnes to the prison of Vincennes under a *lettre de cachet*, was sent to Fort-l'Evêque by M. de la Vrillière for the sole reason that it was impossible for the son of a clockmaker to be in the right in a quarrel with a duke and peer.

Of Madame Ruette, Grimm writes on the occasion of her retirement in 1777:

"This charming actress united to the most engaging of voices and the finest of countenances, a tact that is infinitely rare, and a most naïve and delicate sensibility. It is hopeless to expect to see again the rôles of Isabella and Columbine played as they were played by her. The delightful scene of the Rose in *Le Magnifique* was entirely her own work; she diffused into it a mixture of propriety and interest whose magic is inexplicable. A singular saying, perhaps, but one full of truth, was that of Madame d'Houdetot when she declared that, '*in that moment Madame La Ruette expressed modesty even in her back.*'"

The theatres of the fair of Saint-Laurent took possession of the types, the pieces and the music of the Italians. They played and sang French recitatives with Italian music, French dance music and French romances. Down to 1721 we can find only couplets upon ancient airs, or those which already had been sung elsewhere.

In 1737, Monsigny wrote the music of *On Ne S'Avise Jamais de Tout*, and of several other comic operas. In 1759, Duni composed *La Veuve Indécise*, and Laruette wrote *Le Boulevard* in 1753. Other composers of music for the Opéra-Comique were MM. Lacoste, Gillier, Aubert, Delacroix, etc.

Since the Opéra-Comique manifested too great a development, and the Italian troupe fell short of what was necessary, the two companies united their forces in 1761. The troupe of the Opéra-Comique was then composed of Mesdemoiselles Deschamps, Rosaline, Nessel, Luzi, Arnoult, Dezzi, Florigny. The men were Laruette, Bourette, Delisle, Audinot, Parau, Saint-Aubert, Clairval and Guignes.

In the forain theatres the principal actresses singing in comic opera or in parodies were:

Mademoiselle Maillard, the daughter of a cook and a lace-mender. She began in 1696 with Bertrand, who perceived her talent and gave her an engagement in his company, in which she remained for eight years. She married a young man named Cavé, at Besançon. He took the name of Maillard and became an actor (see Scaramouche). She retired when Mademoiselle de Lisle entered the theatre in 1716. On the point of being confined, she was accidentally wounded, and died in September, 1721.

Mademoiselle de Lisle, born in 1684, was barely eleven years of age when she made her first appearance as a soubrette at the Opéra-Comique. She reappeared in 1716, played until 1740, and died in 1758.

Mademoiselle Bastolet, born in Paris, joined the *Jeu de Bertrand* in 1698, on a salary at the rate of tenpence a day. Afterwards she played with Dolet, with the Sieur Saint-Edme, with Lalauze in 1721, and with Honoré in 1724, and she married an Italian doctor in 1735. Later, in the company of the Sieur Pontau, she scored considerable success in the rôles of mothers.

Mademoiselle Lambert played leading parts and sang in vaudevilles; she married Dolet, who, before being a manager of the theatres at the fairs of Saint-Laurent and Saint-Germain, had filled an engagement in the Italian company of Constantini, and afterwards in that of Tortoretti. She left the theatre in 1709, became a *modiste* at the fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent, but, failing to make a success of this business, she induced her husband to give up the theatre, and jointly with him opened a lemonade shop.

THE CANTATRICE

In 1700, Mademoiselle Babron, the daughter of a box opener at the Comédie-Italienne, sister of Babron (the forain Harlequin), appeared in rôles of Columbine and of women disguised as men, in Bertrand's company. In 1707 she married the actor Prevost, and went with him into the country.

In 1710, Mademoiselle d'Aigremont, known under the name of *Camuson*, left her modiste shop to join the Opéra-Comique. She remained there until 1723.

X

THE BALLERINA

The art of dancing is inseparable from the art theatrical, and especially from pantomime. Xenophon relates that on the occasion of the return of the ten thousand Greeks sent to assist Cyrus in his campaign against Artaxerxes, after they had performed their celebrated retreat, dilated upon by all historians, the Greeks instituted the public games and festivals.

"Thracians were the first to appear, full-armed, and leaping to the sound of flutes. They sprang so high and dropped again with so much force, that the spectators seem to have been frightened.

"Next came a Mysian who held a shield in either hand. He span rapidly round and performed dangerous leaps whilst retaining these shields. He ended by striking them one against the other, after the fashion of the Persians, and by executing to the sound of this novel instrument a delightful dance-step.

"After him came a company of Arcadians. They were in brilliant armour and advanced rhythmically, hand in hand, whilst a warlike march was being played by flutes. Some detached themselves from the company, others joined it, and they concluded by dancing in a ring, but with so much rapidity and unanimity that the movement of a wheel is neither swifter nor more equal.

"Finally came two women arrayed in the most elegant garments. One of these performed the Pyrrhic dance, a shield in her hand; the other went through the dance of Ariane, waving a kerchief, and she moved with so much lightness and grace that she delighted the spectators and was greeted at the conclusion of her ballet by the applause of all."

Pindar refers to a dance executed by a troupe of Lacedemonian virgins. The greater part of the Laconian dances were common to boys and to girls. In *Hormus* young men and maidens formed by their interlacings the figure of a collar. The young corypheus advanced with the vigour of his sex, striking male and bellicose attitudes, whilst the girl who led the choir advanced on her side with graceful and modest steps.

"At the beginning," says Lucian, "the same person danced and sang at the same time; but as it was perceived that the effort of the dance was troubling to the breathing, it was considered well to appoint some to sing and others to dance."

Among the dancers of antiquity there were those who imitated the form and the movements of beasts.

"From the imitation of animals the dancers passed on to the imitation of men, selecting those whose professions or vices rendered their movements more nearly akin to those of animals. As the *Emmelie* was the imitation of the most graceful and healthy bodies, the *Cordace*, or comic dance, was

the imitation of bodies ill-made or deformed as a consequence of sensuality and low passions" (Magnin, *Origines du Théâtre Moderne*).

Pliny speaks of the famous Lucceia, who to a talent for dancing added that of declamation, and who reappeared on the stage in her hundredth year, to recite some verses. He speaks also of an actress, Galeria Copiola, mime and dancer, who had made her début in Rome in 671, and who reappeared in the time of Augustus. She had then reached the age of a hundred and four. Phœbe Vocontia and the famous Dionysia, who received two hundred thousand sesterces (about two thousand pounds sterling per annum) were also *saltatriculæ* (dancing mimes).

These two types are to be found in the Renaissance. The animal, the imitative and the burlesque is to be seen as much in the classical masques of the Italian comedy as in the grotesque ones of Leonardo da Vinci; whilst we find the graceful, the noble and the beautiful in the person of the ballerina.

Pietro Maria Cecchini (Fritellino) says, in his discourses on comedy published in 1614 but written at the end of the sixteenth century: "It is more than fifty years since the custom arose of introducing women into the theatre." He means by that, without doubt, that the women were entrusted with rôles holding an important place in the plot, and supplanting the boys to whom such parts had been entrusted until then. From the fifteenth century (1494), in Italy, we find women in the theatre, performing concurrently with young men, and very often licentious in word and deed, the rôles of goddesses,

nymphs or of allegorical and mythological characters. These early actresses in the comedy of the sixteenth century, notwithstanding the great liberty of customs and of language, contrived to maintain some of the reserve proper to their sex.

In his *Supplica*, N. Barbieri (Beltrame) says :

" I shall never bow to the custom of having the rôles of women or of young girls performed by boys, especially after having seen the disadvantages which result from this in certain troupes. To begin with these young people do not know how to dress themselves in the garments which do not belong to their sex, and they get themselves dressed at home by their women or their brainless servants, who sometimes amuse themselves by trifling with them, so that he whose senses have not been calmed by age or by serious care may easily become vain and fatuous ; being thus disguised as women, these youngsters show themselves about the town, talking and fooling one with another ; they come dishevelled to the theatre, and it is then necessary that their friends or preceptors should dress their heads again, renew their paint and rearrange their garments. We are to be thankful if they but come in time, and then it is necessary to flatter them and to cajole them so to give them courage ; there is more than enough in all this to weary the patience of those entrusted with such matters. It is more natural that women should fill the rôles that are proper to them ; they know how to dress themselves and, as they lead decent lives, far from being a source of scandal, they set none but good examples. But, one will exclaim, I have successfully paid my court to an actress. That is possible ; but all women are not so accom-

modating, nor all men so fortunate. Here is a man who for years has pursued an actress and fruitlessly spent treasures upon her. It must be remembered that actresses are women with the same nature as their sister women. They may not fall but all the world knows it; and, apart from the fear of God, they are compelled to live with more care and virtue than those who are in a position to cover their faults with the mantle of hypocrisy."

"For the rest," says M. H. A. Soleirol, in an interesting work on Molière and his troupe, "the appearance of women on the boards seems to go back to very remote ages, as may be seen in ancient drawings. According to these pictures, which give the names of actors and indicate the rôles which they filled, we see that in the fifteenth century many women performed in the mystery plays rôles either of females or of angels. Many other old portraits show us that in the sixteenth century women performed on the trestles in the public places; and lastly we know the costumes of the women who took part in the comedies of Marguerite of Navarre in 1540."

If in the fifteenth century in France women were permitted to appear and to take part in the mystery plays, there is every reason to suppose that they were performing long before then in the theatres of Italy, a nation which always led the way in artists of all kinds.

It is very certain that throughout the Middle Ages there was no lack of Bohemiennes and *joculatores* on the trestles. They came to enliven the sumptuous repasts of the great lords by performing comedy-scenes like those of *Le Berger et la Bergère*,

Courtois, *Mariage* and *Pèlerin*. The performances of these plays were intermingled with dances and songs. The earliest actresses derived a great deal from these *ballerine*. The rôles which they performed, however, were very short ones in scenarii that were very simple, and one woman in a troupe would often be sufficient to discharge all the female parts. We know that down to the end of the seventeenth century the broader female rôles (such as those of gossips) were invariably performed by men, by Scaramouche, Harlequin and Pierrot.

Later on it became necessary that all Italian actresses should be able to dance; that was part of their primary education. For many celebrated actresses, indeed, it was the essential factor in their admission into the theatre; and even in the eighteenth century it was necessary for the immortal tragic actress Hippolyte Clairon to be able to dance and sing so as to be accepted into the Théâtre-Italien. Coraline and Camille, the famous daughters of the actor Veronese, owed their chief success to their dancing. This applies also to Madame Favart, whose village dance in sabots took Paris by storm.

In the plays of Angelo Beolco (Ruzzante, 1530), the young woman does not take up more than two or three scenes, somewhere about the middle of the piece, leaving it to other characters to continue and work out the story. We find her still the object of the plot; but, contrary to our modern theatrical rules, she disappears sometimes in the very moment when the interest of which she is the pivot reaches its climax. The reason for the slight development of these rôles was without doubt the insufficiency and inexperience of the actresses entrusted with them, and perhaps also their obligation to go and change their dress for the final ballet. In

La Mandragora, of Macchiavelli, Lucretia appears for the first time in the third act, and does not reappear thereafter until the end of the fifth.

With the Italians, the dance was in such high repute that in the sixteenth century young Frenchwomen "would go beyond the Alps to learn it." No spectacles were given in Italy that did not include dances and music, and to this day there are interludes in *Norma* and *Semiramide* of ballets imitating village dances.

In the seventeenth century the court of Savoy set the fashion to all other courts of Europe by its ballets and fairy scenes, under the direction of the famous Comte d'Aglié, a fertile genius in the matter of theatrical invention.

The scenario of one of his ballets, given on the occasion of the birth of the Cardinal of Savoy in 1634, is extremely curious by virtue of the singular allegorical personages introduced into it. The title of this ballet is: *La Veritá nemica della Apparenza sollevata dal Tempo.*

"At rise of curtain a choir of False-Reports and of Suspicions is discovered, preceding Appearance and Falsehood. The back of the stage is opened. Upon a great cloud borne by the Winds Appearance is seen dressed in a garment of changing colours sewn with mirrors, and equipped with the wings and tail of a peacock; she is in a sort of nest whence issue a crowd of Pernicious Falsehoods, Frauds and Cheats; Pleasant Falsehoods, Flatteries and Intrigues; Comical Falsehoods, Pleasantries and Pretty little Stories.

"These characters had their various entrances until the advent of Time. He drove out Appearance, and caused the

cloud upon which she had been enthroned to be opened. Within it was then discovered a huge hour-glass from which came Truth and the Hours. These last characters, after various speeches analogous to the subject, formed the great ballet."

It was then the custom for great personages, even sovereigns themselves, to take part in fêtes of this brilliant kind. Thus, Louis XIV., desiring in his pleasures as in other things to be the first of his century, danced in the ballets of his court, and received the applause of the comedians for his performance as actor, singer and dancer.

"The King has twice rehearsed the ballet which he intends to dance before the Queen of England" (Guy Patin, 1661). It was in this same year that the great monarch created a dancing academy, "because," he says in his letters patent, "the art of dancing has always been recognised as one of the most virtuous and necessary to adapt the body to exercise, and consequently one of the most useful to our nobility, not only in time of war in our armies, but also in time of peace in our ballets."

Louis XIV. loved the rôle of the Sun in these splendid ballets, for the production of one of which no less than nine hundred new costumes were prepared. Sometimes, however, he did not disdain to be seen in a comic part. In the ballet of the *Seasons* he represented the golden-headed Ceres surrounded by the reapers, which were played by Messeigneurs de Saint-Aignan and de Vertpré, MM. Lulli and Bruneau, the Sieurs Beauchamp, Raynal, Lecomte and Lapierre. In the *Triumph of Bacchus*, he performed the part of a sort of good-for-nothing

cutpurse and bully, and even sang a couplet in favour of the fair sex. In *Les Amants Magnifiques*, a comedy-ballet by Molière (1670), he not only co-operated in the preparation of the scenery and in the production, but mimed, danced, sang and played the flute and the guitar.

Let us cite amongst the most famous dancers Gertrude Boon, called *la belle Tourneuse*; a surname derived from the style of dance which she performed. She appeared and obtained the greatest possible success in the theatre of Dame Baron, at the fair of Saint-Germain. Gertrude Boon was young, beautiful and extremely gracious in the performance of her bizarre evolutions. She was no less virtuous than gifted and turned a deaf ear upon the sighs of her numerous suitors. Amongst these was a Sieur Gervais who had amassed a considerable fortune at play and who, to prove to this austere maiden how sincerely he loved her, offered her his fortune and his name. Gertrude accepted him for her husband, not on account of his fortune, but believing in the genuineness of his affection. The marriage however was not a happy one, and Gertrude was driven to seek a dissolution of it. But she failed in this, the validity of the marriage being confirmed by a judgment of the 4th March 1715.

Violente, a famous rope dancer, was an Italian. She made her first appearance at the fair of Saint-Laurent in 1717, and she was there seen dancing at the *Folies d'Espagne* upon a balanced plank, eight inches wide, with as much grace as security.

Mademoiselle Hamoche, the wife of Hamoche, the Pierrot of the fairs, united, in 1721, the capacities of tragic actress and première danseuse in the forain theatres.

In 1724, Mademoiselle Grognet was dancing at the Opéra-Comique ; she passed into the service of the Duke of Modena in 1736, and married the Marquis d'Argens, at Berlin.

Mademoiselle Cuppi de Camargo, born in Brussels in 1710, made her first appearance at the Opéra in 1726 at the age of sixteen, and did not leave it until 1751. Voltaire compares her to Mademoiselle Sallé, another dancer quite as famous :

" Ah ! Camargo, que vous êtes brillante !
Mais que Sallé, grands dieux ! est ravissante !
Que vos pas sont légers, et que les siens sont doux !
Elle est inimitable, et vous êtes nouvelle :
Les Nymphes sautent comme vous,
Et les Grâces dansent comme elle."

She was received with enthusiasm, her name became so popular that fashions assumed it. There were Camargo bonnets, Camargo corsets, Camargo head-dresses, Camargo cakes, etc., etc. ; never had such a vogue been known. Compelled, notwithstanding her brilliant début, to remain among the supernumeraries in consequence of the jealousy of Mademoiselle Prévot, Camargo contrived to issue in a brilliant manner from those ranks.

" A dance of Demons was being done. The principal actor misses his entrance and whilst the orchestra, nevertheless, plays the air of the solo, murmurs rise from the groundlings ; they become noisy and the actor is embarrassed, when the young débutante, seized with a happy inspiration, leaps to the middle of the stage, and improvises with spirit a Spanish step which delights the dissatisfied spectators, and transports them with admiration."

Camargo was chiefly distinguished for her extraordinary lightness and her wild gaiety.

In a letter written from Italy in 1739 by the Président de Brosses, the following passage occurs :—

"There is nothing better to do when one arrives than to go to the comedy to seek amusement; this is what we did at Verona. I cannot get accustomed to the cheapness of the prices; the first places do not cost ten sous; but the Italian nation is imbued with the taste for spectacles so that the quantity of people who attend fully compensates for this. Thanks be to God there is no trouble to find room at the comedy in Verona. It is performed right in the middle of the ancient amphitheatre of the Romans, and there are no other places provided for the spectators but those on the steps of the amphitheatre, where all sit together and where some thirty thousand persons can be accommodated. The companies of the country itself are, in my view, better than those which are transplanted to Paris and to our provinces, but the object of my ever-increasing surprise, although I have seen her every day, is a young dancer who leaps at least as high as Javilliers who can make twenty successive capers without once repeating herself, and perform every one of the steps that are so admired in our dancing masters; so that on the score of lightness Camargo, by comparison with her, is a dancer of stone. In general the dancers of this country are very much stronger and cleverer than our own."

Favart, in a letter of the 20th June 1762, proposed to the Count of Durazzo the engagement of Baletti the elder, a

son of Silvia and he spoke at the same time of Mademoiselle Dumalgé :

" Baletti is young, no more than thirty to thirty-three years of age. He has with him a young dancer, Mademoiselle Dumalgé, of sixteen to seventeen years old ; she is very shapely, though perhaps a little high in the shoulders, which is but a trivial fault. After Catinon and Camille, she is the very best of our first dancers at the Théâtre-Italien. She will follow the fortunes of Baletti, who has, it is said, secretly married her."

The dance has changed like the fashions, and yet when we look at the ancient figures, statues, painting and Etruscan, Greek and Roman bas-reliefs which preserve for us numerous types of dancers of both sexes, we are impressed by the fact that the grace of the human body is above and beyond all transient conventions, and that it has remained the same throughout the ages in which the art of dancing has been spreading through the world. One might compare the Ballerina of the Renaissance with the dancer with the timbrel of Herculaneum, and discover the same movement of body and the same simplicity of garments. In other paintings the manner of holding up a corner of the gown, of draping the body in the *tarentina* or of raising cymbals or a veil above the head, might have been created yesterday by the latest brilliant choregrapher from Italy—Taglioni, Carlotta Grisi, La Rosati or La Ferraris.

The famous Bigottini, the greatest mime of the nineteenth century in the serious manner, who could draw tears from her

audience in her pathetic scenes, was French. In her day (1809), France was infatuated with Italian artists to such an extent that several of our composers gave the first performances of their compositions as if they were the work of ultramontane artists; an instance of this is afforded by Mohul, with his comic opera *L'Irato.*

XI

STENTERELLO

Stenterello, Meneghino and Gianduja are what the Italians call *caratterista*—that is to say, they are character parts interposed; in other words, they are rôles which, whilst frequently being of no value to the action of the piece, are nevertheless introduced so as to throw, even into the darkest melodrama, a little mirth by jests and pleasantries that are frequently incoherent and quite irrelevant. Whatever the piece that is performed, the *caratterista* comes to discharge his own peculiar part in it—speaking his own dialect, and dressed in his own traditional costume—among other actors who speak Italian and are dressed according to the exigencies of the situation and the piece. Stenterello in Tuscany, Meneghino in the Milanese, and Gianduja in Piedmont are all of them the same type, modified to suit the particular taste of each province. Each of these three masks is to-day the sole representative mask of his country. They have dethroned and replaced throughout northern Italy Harlequin and Brighella, who survive merely as puppets in the marionette shows.

"The gentlemen of La Crusca," says M. Frédéric Mercey, "and the purists of Florence in general, are the avowed enemies of poor Stenterello. They cannot bring themselves to speak of him without scorn and anger, and it is less his

conduct than the incorrectness of his language and his weakness for dialect which provokes their hatred. Stenterello, in effect, is Tuscan rather than Florentine. You will find him at Perugia, at Arezzo, at Pistoia, and at Siena ; he is even naturalised in Lucca, in Pisa and in Bologna, and he speaks perfectly the accented language of the people of these towns, of which you would believe him to be a native. But if his language varies his actions are always the same. In Bologna Stenterello took some time ago the ways of his companions of Venice, Milan and Turin, Harlequin, Meneghino and Girolamo, between whom and himself it is not to be doubted that certain bonds of relationship exist. The fact is that all these are mere variants of the same type, various countenances of the same character, modified by environment and climate."

The Florentines claim that their Stenterello, a very fantastic personage, was created in the late eighteenth century by an extremely popular actor named Il Buono. The cut of this character's costume, however, does not tend to prove him of so recent a creation. The showy and variegated colours of the garb of Stenterello, the three deep parallel lines at each corner of the mouth—derived from the ancient *rictus* worn by all the masks of the Renaissance—seem to us to belong to a sixteenth-century type, a type no doubt forgotten, but strikingly resuscitated by the actor Buono.

This opinion that types are no longer improvised, but merely transformed, is that of M. Frédéric Mercey. " In the days of the republic of Florence," he says, speaking of Stenterello, " he dwelt in palaces ; he was then in the very prime of life, and in the fine vigour of his spirit ; he was called Machiavelli,

Boccaccio, L'Aretino or Poggio. Stenterello is the rather vulgarised descendant of these fine wits, and he has inherited in particular their vices and their meannesses. I am surprised that instead of taking the name of *Stenterello* he should not have retained that of Poggio. But the name of Stenterello —derived from the verb *stentare*, to endure—prevailed.

Stenterello does not deliberately aim either at wit or at malice ; when he achieves one or the other he does so unconsciously, as a result of his natural ingenuousness. Like all the types of the Italian comedy, he is a faithful reflection of the people who created him.

During the carnival of Florence, great sheets, upon which were painted the acts and *gesta* of Stenterello, were wont to drape the corners of every street. His performances were held in the little theatres of the *Piazza Vecchia* and the *Borgo Ogni Santo*. The lower orders of Florence encumbered the pit and the aristocracy filled the boxes. Twopence was the price of a seat in the pit, and the best boxes were to be had for a florin. At these same prices admission was to be gained also throughout the remainder of the year when the entertainment consisted of operas sung by worn-out tenors and young creatures who had discarded the needle for the pursuit of art. Nevertheless everybody attended when the great theatres were closed, and one even heard in these places the music of Cimarosa, of Rossini and of Meyerbeer.

No piece was possible in Florence without Stenterello. He was sometimes the servant, sometimes the master ; sometimes he parodied the hero of drama, of comedy or of a fashionable romance. Sometimes he personified passions and political caricatures of a palpitating actuality, and his popularity was

heightened when, under the anger of the censors, he was sent to spend some days in prison in the person of the actor who performed him, or even of the impresario who admitted him to the stage. Apart from the special pieces of which he is the hero, he is to be seen in a great number of others into which he is introduced even if he has to be dragged in by the ears; thus, for instance, we have *Robert the Devil, with Stenterello*; *Don Giovanni, with Stenterello*, etc. Tragedy, drama and serious opera, all make room for him. From choice he undertakes in them the rôle of a cowardly and comical servant. He is very amusing when he is seduced by the nuns in *Robert the Devil* or when he receives the statue of the commander to supper in *Don Giovanni*.

He changes his costume freely, according to the exigencies of the piece, but he preserves immutably his triumphant black wig, which terminates in a long red queue after the Prussian fashion, his black eyebrows either in the form of corkscrews or else terminating at the ears like those of certain ancient masks, his three deep parallel lines at the corners of his mouth, and finally his white-painted cheeks, on which he sometimes plasters a daub of rouge, shaped like a cart-wheel. But his chief characteristic, the seal without which Stenterello's existence would be impossible, is the absence of the handsomest of his front teeth. The actor who is to devote himself to the reproduction of this amusing character must, to begin with, undergo this sacrifice. The more marked is the black gap thus made in his upper jaw, the more sure is his success. Moreover the absence of this middle tooth is of enormous assistance to the actor in the imitation of the dialect of the Tuscan folk.

Stenterello is addicted to violent colours. He wears a pale

blue coat and a yellow waistcoat, a pair of breeches that are black, or of which one leg is sometimes of an apple-green. His cotton stockings, one of which is red, the other striped blue and white, are stretched upon slightly knock-kneed legs, which bear witness to his Florentine origin. He leaves high heels to the gentlemen of the court of Louis XIV. ; he parades his great feet in stout shoes adorned with enormous tin buckles.

Stenterello has neither the malice nor the coarseness of most of the Italian buffoons. We feel that he belongs to a people whose prime requirement is a black coat, and whose greatest desire is to be addressed in the third person. The lively pleasantries of Stenterello are never indecent. His appearance is always in harmony with the proprieties, and he has a certain naïveté proper to the Tuscan people. He is not brave, he never wants to kill anyone, but he lives in great fear of being killed himself. Lean and active, he is always ready to run for it at the first sign of danger. Extremely susceptible, he is gallant towards all women, but it does not amuse him to pay them a protracted court ; he lacks the necessary patience. He does not eschew manners which frequently lead to his being cuffed. After women, life's chief attraction for him lies in the table. Greediness will lead him to forget love ; to obtain a good dinner he will perform a thousand knaveries, he will even submit, perhaps, to be beaten, although he has no love for blows, and is greatly in dread for their effect upon his health. His laziness is proverbial, and there is no doubt that if he were possessed of a few halfpence he would be as avaricious as he is gluttonous ; but since he possesses nothing of his own, he contents himself with coveting the wives and the dinners of his neighbours, and he loves to lie in the sun like a lizard, dozing,

with one eye on the watch. He is happy if he can find an indulgent ear into which to speak ill of this person and that; he will then forget that his belly is empty, and will himself be more amused by his own quips than will others.

M. Frédéric Mercey, in his *Théâtre en Italie*, speaks of several scenarii in which Stenterello plays the protagonist part, the entire action of the piece turning about him. He is the lover of a princess, and desires to declare to her his passion after having performed an exaggerated toilet, with his wig nicely curled. He has even borrowed the travelling satchel of an Englishman of his acquaintance, so as to be irreproachable in his personability. "This satchel contains a multitude of objects whose purposes he cannot even guess, besides fourteen nail-brushes of various patterns. The implied criticism of the meticulous cleanliness of the English is entirely Italian and very droll. Stenterello is astonished by the contents of the satchel, and, after examining each object at length, he attempts to use it. His embarrassment and his commentaries are extremely amusing. Finally, after a hundred futile endeavours appropriately to employ this complicated machinery, he ends by depilating his nose with the corn-razor, and by brushing his teeth with a soap-box full of soap, which distorts his countenance into horrible grimaces."

Here is an episode from the misfortunes of Stenterello, from which it will be seen that the author has had no scruples about pillaging the adventures of Falstaff:

A prince surprises Stenterello at the feet of the princess his wife. Stenterello thinks to escape by pretending that he is seeking a bracelet which the lady has dropped. The princess, in agreement with her husband, gives Stenterello an

assignation. Intoxicated with fatuity, he forgets all prudence, and goes, to be flouted in the chamber of the princess. The prince arrives, Stenterello hides in a coffer. The husband pretends to have heard a noise in his wife's room. He feigns jealousy, and beats with his sword on the coffer. Stenterello, enclosed in it, bounds with fear. The princess explains that the noise is made by rats. The prince orders the coffer to be thrown into the River Arno. Stenterello, who is in terror, and wants to raise the lid, which is crushing his fingers, cries out and is discovered. The princess pretends to swoon. Four men arrive, and they seize Stenterello, who leaves his wig in their hands. He begs for mercy. He says that he was but preparing a surprise for the princess in the hope of amusing her, "and I mistook this coffer for the door when I attempted to leave the room."

"No, no! Don Stenterello," says the prince. "You are an old debauchee, and you are going to be punished." The prince draws an enormous hunting knife sharp as a razor, and threatens him by a terrible gesture, to the great applause of the public. Stenterello begs again for mercy, and swears that he is not guilty.

"And if I were to forgive you, and to restore you to liberty, what should you do now?"

"I am of agreeable appearance," says Stenterello, lifting up his bald scarred head, "and have a voice as lovely as a flute; the impresario of the theatre of the *Borgo Ogni Santo* would, I am sure, give me an engagement as *soprano*."

Sometimes he imitates the boasts of the captains or of Scaramouche. He then assumes a military costume, causes his spurs to jingle, and trails a great sword after him. He swears

by bombs and cannons, and he relates how, at a single sword-stroke, he split in twain a cavalier and his horse.

After having engaged in all professions, after having been a doctor, a lawyer, a brigand, a porter, without ever making a success of anything, he returns to Florence. He had left his wife there in misery in a hovel. He finds her now dressed with great elegance, and occupying a handsome house.

"Am I really at home?" he inquires.

Upon receiving an affirmative reply from his wife, and having made the discovery that she is more beautiful than he had ever suspected, he asks her whence proceeds all this wealth.

"My friend," says she, "you recommended me to Providence when you departed, and Providence has not forgotten me."

Stenterello is enchanted. After he has eaten and drunk, and as he is reposing in one of the arm-chairs of Providence, his wife enters with three children who throw themselves upon his neck. Thereupon he protests: "Per Bacco! I did not leave a single child in Florence. Is it Providence again that has undertaken to make me a father?"

"Without a doubt," says Madame Stenterello, "and you shall lose nothing by it."

Stenterello accepts his position with an air of comical resignation. No sooner has he become accustomed to his house and his furniture than he grows miserly. He will not consent to cut an egg into four, deeming it wasteful.

"At breakfast," he says, "an egg ought to be pricked at one of its ends with a pin. Through this puncture half the contents is sucked, the rest being left for dinner. In this fashion taste is satisfied, the pleasure of eating is long-drawn

and the purse does not grow empty. Moreover the egg is not lost, the shell may be taken back to the poultry-keeper, so that with it she may invite the hens to lay further. That is what I call eating an egg in a profitable manner."

Having turned avaricious, he becomes a speculator, and, seeking quickly to double his capital, he so contrives that he loses everything. But Stenterello is growing old and his wife with him; with age she can no longer hope for anything from Providence. Stenterello drives her out, with reproaches upon her evil conduct, and sends the children to the devil, calling them bastards.

Stenterello is often oppressed in his home life. In an Italian farce which shows him as a musician, he has for wife a virago who constantly scolds and shouts. He decides never to answer her in dangerous moments, save by a funereal note, drawn from the depths of an enormous hunting horn, very much larger than himself. A sound and no more; but what a sound!

This idea of replying only by a sound is reminiscent of the scene of Arzigogolo, a Florentine peasant of the sixteenth century, an ancestor of the more modern Stenterello. Charged with theft, Arzigogolo repairs to Alesso, a lawyer, to undertake his defence. The affair being explained, Ser Alesso sees only one way out of it for Arzigogolo, and that is to feign insanity.

ARZIGOGOLO. Oh! uh! I don't know how to do it. It is difficult. If I were wise I should do this. (*He strikes him with his stick.*)

ALESSO. May the devil take you, wretch! You have nearly broken my shoulder; you will be a fool indeed if you caress the judge in that fashion.

ARZIGOGOLO. I have heard tell that fools always strike;

I had a brother whose brain was deranged who always behaved like that to me. (*He advances to strike again.*)

ALESSO. Be quiet, animal! Can you think of no other way to play the fool?

ARZIGOGOLO. I have heard tell that fools throw stones. I will go and find one and throw it at your head.

The lawyer, having prevailed upon him to be quiet, advises him to answer all the judge's questions by a whistle.

Arzigogolo appears before the judge, who asks him: "What is your name, peasant? Where do you live?" etc. Arzigogolo answers each of these questions by a sharp whistle. The judge dismisses him acquitted, greatly pitying him.

Comes the lawyer to claim his fee, and he receives from the peasant no other answer but the same whistle.

The Stenterello of Bologna does not play parts of an importance equal to those of the Florentine Stenterello. He is usually a servant, wearing his livery with negligence and dressed awry. Like his Florentine namesake he wears stockings of different colours, which is, as we have said, a tradition of the variegated costumes of the sixteenth century. He is a poltroon and a dolt, but his most distinctive trait is his preoccupation, so profound that it sometimes amounts to imbecility. In Bologna Stenterello is a rather fantastic being. His continual absent-mindedness, his mania for relating stories which never come to an end, and which he interrupts at the most interesting point, his jests and his grimaces are all accepted as drolleries and impertinences by the public. The manner in which he turns to crave his master's pardon for having committed a fresh stupidity disarms the anger of old Tabarino himself, who

laughs and takes the public to witness, with an air of resignation, exclaiming: "What would you? It is Stenterello!"

It has been said that there never have been, and never will be, two Stenterelli who resemble one another. He is the most difficult personage to present of all the masks of the Italian comedy. He is a type full of fantasy in his jests, and of spontaneity in his improvisation.

Stenterello, having angered his master, who has withdrawn so as not to be driven to beat him, takes the public into his confidence: "Conceive now—— But then you saw him for yourselves, didn't you? My master had given me a letter to get mended and a watch to put in the post, into that big hole with which you are perfectly acquainted, like the mouth of Gina, who is a pretty girl with eyes bigger than my nose. Well then, it happened that I met Signor Birrichino, who said to me: 'Stenterello!' . . . a droll of a name that, which comes to me from my father, who married my mother, so that my mother, who was the daughter of my grandfather, who was the father of my father, who was the father of his son, who was the father of my mother, had a husband who was the son of my grandmother. Oh! no, no!" (He turns a pirouette and is on the point of going out.) "Where is my master? What a droll master! He is so absent-minded that he has forgotten to give me a new pair of stockings." (He thrusts out his leg, loses his balance, stumbles over his foot and pretends to fall; but he recovers, and carefully seeks the thing that may have tripped him. He picks up a hair.) "I am losing them all." (He takes off his wig and shows his bald head, a disclosure which never fails to amuse the public. Taking the hair, he replaces it on his head with care, whereafter he puts on his

wig back to front, and seeks to continue his discourse; but the long queue which hangs down over his nose, and which he thrusts aside at every moment, causes him horribly to squint. "My hair, which was the son of my wig, which was the grandmother of the watch which I took to the post. . . . But what the devil's this?" (And he pulls at the end of the long queue, which gradually comes undone; he continues to pull, and draws off so many yards of ribbon that he becomes entangled in it, and ends by running off shouting: "The devil, the devil!" leaving the public in suspense on the score of the explanation which he had to offer of the way in which he had discharged his errand.) It is quite impossible to convey any adequate notion of his utterance of all these inconsequent ideas, interrupted by poses and grimaces; the performance must be witnessed if the success of such a type is to be understood.

"Harlequin is made, but Stenterello is born," said one who still laughed twenty years afterwards in relating the jests and postures of Dominicone, a comic actor of great gifts. He played the parts of father with Stenterello for his servant. The troupe of Bon and Romagnoli, which was in the service of the King of Sardinia in 1833, still possessed a very remarkable Stenterello, who was the cause of a deal of laughter, particularly when Gattinelli played the rôle of master at the theatre of the Corso, at Bologna.

In Florence, Ricci was the most famous of the modern Stenterelli. He was an actor of endowments greatly above those of the buffoon. He played with great spirit and taste the rôles of Bouffé and Arnal, intermingling them with Stenterellic jests.

In 1853, at the theatre of San Carlino in Naples, Altavilla was still a remarkable *caratterista* in every sense, using always the Neapolitan dialect. What an extraordinary verve of improvisation must have been necessary to enable an actor to create a fresh rôle every second or third day!

ii

The modero MENEGHINO, a character sometimes servant, sometimes master and sometimes peasant, speaking the dialect of Lombardy, descends in fairly direct line from the Menego of Ruzzante, and the Menghino of *La Lena* of Ariosto.

Whilst it is true that his garments, of a rather modern cut, are reminiscent of those of Stenterello, but more sober in the matter of colour, they do not at all resemble those of his ancestor Menego. But why should Meneghino more than any other mask have been faithful to tradition in the matter of costume? The modern Brighella, for instance, resembles but faintly the Brighella of the sixteenth century, whilst about the Pantaloon of to-day very little remains of the erstwhile Venetian Pantalone.

Meneghino, the Milanese, wears a short coat and breeches of green cloth with red buttons and lacings; his waistcoat is flowered, and his stockings striped. His countenance, jovial of expression with its tip-tilted nose, is framed in a wig of flat hair gathered into a queue wrapped in red; and his hat, laced in red, is far more like one of those enormous castors worn by the sixteenth-century buffoon than a tricorne.

Menego and Menato are, under two different names, one and the same personage, created by Marco Aurelio Alvarotto, an

actor in the Paduan troupe of Ruzzante. He is a comic type, a sort of simple and poltroon peasant and sometimes a servant. Under his apparent stupidity, Menego (Domenico), thinking and speaking in the manner of the peasants, frequently complains of the customs and vices of the day.

Here is a " very facetious and very comical " dialogue from the plays of Ruzzante, declaimed at Fossone during the hunt in 1528. (*Recitato a Fosson alla caccia.*)

Menego. January, February. March, April, May, and June —the month of wheat; to the devil with the others! The year is too long. Provided that wheat becomes bread through the sickle, that is all that matters. But who is this that comes? Is it not my gossip Duozzo? It is he. Gossip, how goes the harvest?

Duozzo. Badly, gossip. Whoever seeks misery this year will find it without a signpost to guide him.

Menego. As for me, I seek a means to eat as little as possible. These cursed beetroots have so enlarged me that I take a deal of filling.

Duozzo. To tell you the truth, gossip, I think you ought to eat sorb-apples so as to reduce your poor stomach; that is my opinion.

Menego. What I seek, gossip, is to render myself ill, because when I am ill I have no appetite; and to have no appetite is all that I can desire. Do you understand, gossip?

Duozzi. You speak very wisely, gossip.

Menego. The usurers will neither sell wheat nor even display it, so that there is nothing to be done. I am inclined to think that there will be quite enough even should they sell it at a large profit. But they hunger after the blood of the poor more than a lean horse hungers after new grass.

Duozzi. That is very true, gossip, and we may shout, curse, or grow as rabid as dogs before wheat will be harvested for the

common weal; but judging from the month of January, I think that there will be abundance and all men will rejoice.

MENEGO. But for that hope, gossip, we should be in bad case. And as for me, I fear lest the highway robbers and the gentry may eat the harvest before it is ripe.

DUOZZO. I share your fears, but they cannot carry off everything.

MENEGO. Ay! We'll get what they leave, and we shall grow so fat on it that we shall look like hanged men, and so light that the wind will blow us away.

DUOZZO. So that, gossip, you are afraid?

MENEGO. I? I am afraid of nothing but fear. I am a man, and if any are going to survive, I should like to be one of them.

DUOZZO. As for me I am troubled by neither wife nor child. I live like a thief. And now, gossip, let us speak of more pleasing things. How go your love affairs?

MENEGO. Eh, gossip, how shall love affairs progress when one possesses nothing? How shall a man take home a wife when there is only a single piece of bread in the house? If she has a good appetite she will not be able to live on words. You understand?

DUOZZO. Of course; it is quite clear.

The conversation continues on these lines. Menego announces that he is awaiting the harvest to marry a certain Gnva. Duozzo tells him, little by little, that he knows a *quidam* who will not await the new harvest to find food for Gnva, and that in fact he carried her off three days ago.

"I don't believe it," says Menego; "nevertheless let us go and find her and hear the truth from her."

Duozzo begs leave to go and fetch his weapons, saying that there are wolves in the forest, and that he does not care to

quarrel with Nale, who is Menego's rival. Menego replies that there is no need for weapons on a visit to Gnva, that he has his knife, which is sufficient. (Here follow some very equivocal pleasantries and puns.) He winds up by saying that he did not know his gossip for a coward, but now that he sees that he is, he will go alone. Gnva, however, solves the matter by arriving in person.

MENEGO. Good-morrow, my dear Gnva, how are you ?

GNVA. I should be better if I had bread. This is a very evil year.

MENEGO. I have brought you a large piece which, on my honour, I shall give you if you will answer me on certain matters which my gossip here has told me.

Before replying Gnva wants to sing. They sing, and, as they are finishing, Nale, Menego's rival, enters and leaps upon him, sword in hand, shouting: "I have got you, traitor! Surrender!"

Menego attempts to escape without answering; he darts this way and that, receiving so many blows that in the end he falls down. Nale carries off Gnva, and Menego is left on the ground.

"Am I unfortunate enough?" he cries. "One hundred against one! He has pierced me through and through; there are more holes in me than in a sieve. What a beautiful life awaited me! I think of it now that I am on the point of death. Confession! confession! I am covered with blood. Duozzi, my gossip, go and find me a doctor; but then he lives too far away; and perhaps he wouldn't come; and even if he came perhaps he wouldn't be able to heal my wounds. I am certain

that I shall never get well again, I shall be crippled for life, that is sure. Woe me! Must I die then in such a moment as this? Something told me that I should die this year, if not from wounds then from hunger in this devastated country. And so that you die, Menego, what does it matter whether you die thus or of hunger? And I shall never see my Gnva again! Yet my heart tells me that perhaps I shall get well! Shall I allow myself to die or not? What am I to do, or what am I not to do? What if I were to take vengeance upon this dog of a traitor who has just slashed me into ribbons? Yes, I shall be avenged! I shall let it be known everywhere that he has killed me. May the plague stifle him, the coward! I shall send him to the galleys! I shall kill myself. It shall be said everywhere that he is my assassin. But how shall I kill myself? That is the trouble. There are so many ways, yet now that I come to seek one I cannot find any! Where is the knife? Now that I need it I no longer have it. But I shall find a way. I shall eat myself. That will begin by satisfying my hunger. None but myself will know it, and it will be said that this wretch murdered me and that dogs ate my body, and in this fashion he will be sent to the galleys. Ah yes, you shall go to the galleys; yes, to the galleys! Don't grow impatient, gossip, I shall bequeath you my knife and my shoes. Yet it is a pity to die so young! Farewell, Gnva, I shall never see you again. Yet, wait! I don't want to eat myself, I should suffer too much. I shall strangle myself."

A magician arrives. Duozzo tells him that Menego has gone mad. The magician, half-priest, half-doctor, cures him, and fortifies him with fresh hope. He assures him that he shall see his Gnva as much as he desires, and that he shall have abund-

ance of bread. Menego, comforted, thanks him and announces that he never felt so well.

Then follow predictions: "You shall not die of hunger this year, although you may have to live on very meagre fare. There will be great wars, and after them there will be peace. After famine there will be abundance, and wealthy men will live happily in the world. Thereupon I leave you, I must go. I shall come again on Sunday or some other day."

The piece ends in excuses offered to Menego by his rival. Menego takes the hand of Gnva, who swears for ever after to be faithful to him, whereupon they abandon themselves to joy, dancing and singing.

The character of the modern Meneghino is the same, with few differences, as that of Stenterello; the same costume, the same parts, the same buffoonery, and therefore the same reception from the Milanese public.

"Meneghino," says M. Frédéric Mercey, "has taken the place of Harlequin and Brighella. Meneghino is the spoilt child of the Milanese, the hero of the theatre of la Stadera; his talent consists particularly in a sort of adroit awkwardness, in the amusing manner in which he knocks against walls and trips upon the pavement without ever falling, and without ever losing his nonchalance."

In absent-mindedness and naïveté he surpasses Pierrot. Meeting in the streets of Milan a painter who is carrying two portraits on his shoulders, Meneghino returns to his master, refusing to go the errand upon which he was sent:

"I shall not go out again to-day," he says; "disaster would befall me; I met a man with three heads, and that is not natural."

On another occasion, coming home at night, Meneghino wishes to light his candle, and seeks to strike a light in the darkness. He hurts his fingers and drops flint and steel. How is he to find them again? His ideas work quickly. He gropes about for the candle, finds it, and runs to his next-door neighbour for a light, with which he returns to look for his flint and steel. "I knew I should find them like this," he says, and you behold him striking them once more. A spark flies, the tinder ignites, and he applies it to the candle which has lighted his labours. "Behold," he cries, "it is lighted!"

A very common absent-mindedness with him is to array himself in his master's dressing-gown and slippers, and to lie down in his master's bed. The numerous cuffs he has received have never cured him of this abstractedness. You should see him waiting at table, putting sugar into the soup as though it were salt, pouring wine on to the heads of the guests, and then taking off their wigs to dry them by the fire; he mistakes the candle for the vinegar bottle, and scatters tallow into the salad. He is often to be seen throwing the garments of his master through the window, which he has mistaken for the wardrobe, and doing a thousand other things of a like nature.

Pantaloon, seeing him with a button in his ear, comments upon it. "I wear it," he replies, "because without it I should be sure to hear something dirty." That is the wittiest thing he ever uttered.

iii

Gianduja and Girolamo are one and the same character. At the Fiano theatre in Milan, he was existing still in the nineteenth century under the name of Girolamo, and was performing, in the dialect of Lombardy, the same rôles of talkative, poltroon and greedy peasant as the Gianduja of Turin and Genoa. The Piedmontese, fearing in 1802 that in the name of Girolamo (Jérôme), borne by the king, some political allusion might be suspected, he was rebaptized, and renamed Gianduja.

He is a native of Caglianetto, near Asti, as his dialect shows. He is an astute peasant, who simulates stupidity, either a pretended dolt or else a cunning dolt. His is the style of wit which the English attribute to the Irish. He is very much less fantastic than Stenterello, and when he became Gianduja he ceased to show any of the absent-mindedness of Meneghino and Girolamo. Of this last the following is related :—

" A farmer from the neighbourhood of Bergamo had taken his servant, Girolamo, to market to bring home the cattle which he intended to purchase. This cattle turned out to consist of seven donkeys. Having made his purchase, the farmer called Girolamo, and after counting the animals in his presence he bids him drive them home. Girolamo offers no comment : ' Seven,' he says ; ' very well.' He bestrides one and drives the others before him. Three hours later he arrives at his master's gate, and counts the donkeys without dismounting. After having counted them thrice he still can find only six. ' What a misfortune ! What a misfortune ! ' he

exclaims in his despair. 'If only it were my own property! But since it is the property of another, however honest I may be, I shall be charged with negligence! It is absolutely necessary that I should find the seventh.' He spurs his mount and goes back, searching everywhere and making inquiries from everyone he meets. It is all in vain. Indefatigable, he continues this course for three days and nights, without even pausing to give himself time to eat. In the end the poor beast he is riding falls from fatigue and exhaustion. Girolamo rolls into the dust, picks himself up, and suddenly finds what he was seeking. 'The seventh! I have found it,' he cries. 'Where the devil was it lost?' And he goes back to his master, leaving the poor donkey dead of exhaustion."

In the history of the marionettes, M. Ch. Magnin says:

"In Milan Girolamo fills the principal part in all the farces, in all the parodies, in all the little pieces made up of satirical allusions, the triple source whence flows the fortune of the *Fantoccini*. We have seen Girolamo play Pirithoüs, in a parody of Alceste, powdered white, wearing the wings of a pigeon and a purse. In this farce he accompanies Hercules into hell, and his terrors on the way are somewhat reminiscent of the poltrooneries which, under similar circumstances, Aristophanes attributes to Xanthias in *The Frogs*. In 1841, M. Bourquelot found Girolamo very amusing in a five-act piece: *Il Terribile Maino, Capo di Briganti*, a melodrama to the accompaniment of daggers, swoons and pistol shots. Let us add that the common butt of Girolamo's pleasantries is a Piedmontese, represented as perfectly stupid, a graciousness

and neighbourliness which the Fantoccini of Turin did not fail to reciprocate to their little colleagues of Milan."

Gianduja wears a maroon coat and a yellow waistcoat, both trimmed with red, a pair of green or maroon breeches, red stockings and a black wig with a trumpet-shaped queue in red. His physiognomy is a mixture of coarseness and cunning. His large eyes, his arched and heavy eyebrows, his flat nose, his thick lips, his fat chin and his fleshy cheeks remind us of the countenance of the ancient Silenus.

He was to be seen in Genoa at the Delle-Vigne theatre, playing in his own costume the part of a servant of Ugolino and coming with his quips, to throw a little gaiety into the midst of a black melodrama, in which Ugolino, in his tower, before perishing of hunger, watched his children expiring about him. During these critical moments, Gianduja would enter the sombre dungeon from time to time; it is not clear why he should have had the liberty to do this, for, far from bringing the least nourishment to the dying man, he came to jest in his patois upon this horrible situation.

He was to be seen again at Cuneo at the foot of the Alps. The theatre was more or less open to the sky and admission was not expensive: a penny for the front seats and a halfpenny for the others, and an audience that ate apples and nuts throughout the performance. The piece was *La Principessa Mirabella*, and to one who inquired whether it was written and learned by heart or improvised, the impresario replied: "*Improvisato tutto, e sempre*; Gianduja talks like a peasant." It was an affair of primitive marionettes like those of the Guignol of the Champs-Elysées.

First came a prince dressed in sky-blue satin slashed with white, a cloak of yellow velvet, a cap with white feathers, laced with gold. He was accompanied by Gianduja in his classic costume, and both were lost in a blue forest, and were devising some means of finding food. Gianduja has several notions, such as to repair to the baker at the corner, or the pastrycook opposite. But his master draws his attention to the fact that they are lost in a vast solitude, that their horses are worn out, with weariness and hunger, and that for himself he desires only one thing, death, since the Princess Mirabella will never consent to see him again unless he shall have accomplished her thirty-seven wishes. Gianduja is not disposed to die; he says that he imagined himself at Cuneo, which is entirely outside of the subject, and which shakes the audience with laughter. After having sought for a little while, Gianduja discovers a spring of pure and limpid water. Thus both are saved from certain death. But Gianduja can think of nothing but dying. This marvellous water has quickened his appetite. He has not eaten since morning, he says, since when he has done nothing but walk, which is to treat his body very treacherously. "It is all very well for my master, who at the end of his travels will find Mirabella. But I would very gladly possess a loaf surrounded with sausages." Thereupon he is taken ill, and believes himself to be dying. He implores his master to bury him after he has expired, and whether it be so as not to die under his eyes, whether from other causes, he goes off, followed by the laughter of the spectators.

The action continues thus through four or five scenes, which repeat always the same situation. In each scene the amorous

cavalier recommences his trials until the moment in which the Princess Mirabella—a very beautiful marionette, in cloth-of-gold and velvet, who always makes the same gesture by means of a cord pulled by the impresario—informs her cavalier that she accepts him in marriage, " because he has performed all her wishes, and since nothing pleases women so much as the obedience of men." After this Gianduja demands the hand of the first lady of the court.

Without Gianduja no performance would have been possible. The indulgent public yawned through the scenes of love and rivalry, for there was a traitor in the piece—a traitor dressed like Buridan, with a terrible beard and squinting eyes. Did the impresario perceive that his public was languishing, he never hesitated to cut short the scene and to introduce Gianduja, who abandoned himself to amorous incoherencies.

Gianduja enjoyed his greatest favour in Turin during the nineteenth century. In *The Taking of Delhi*, a long, terrible and spectacular melodrama, Gianduja, disguised as the aide-de-camp of an Indian chief, amused the audience by his reflections, his sallies and his witticisms, always in Piedmontese. He would come and go amidst English soldiers in red coats and white trousers, or amidst kilted Highlanders as freely as among Brahmins dressed like the Turks to be seen at fancy-dress balls. Gianduja crosses the battlefields, enters the besieged garrison or leaves it, is present at war councils, and listens to the enumeration of the dead and wounded without the least discomposure. He is afraid everywhere and of everything, although no one, with the exception of the public, takes the least notice of him.

iv

Zacometo, which is Venetian for Giacometto, who, down to the eighteenth century, was called Momolo (diminutive of Girolamo) is the Venetian *caratterista.* Usually dressed in white calico, he whitens his face like Pierrot save for a large blood-red stain, placed brutally upon one cheek only, and one red stocking as worn by the Venetians in the fifteenth century. Zacometo, whatever costume he may assume, preserves always this red stocking.

There is something of Scapin, something of Harlequin and something of Stenterello in the character, so that his doings and his ways are very varied. When he plays with Brighella, who is sharp, astute and very witty, Zacometo is a dolt, a clown. In *Le Baruffe Chiozzotte* of Goldoni, Zacometo's rôle is that of the fool; dressed like a fisherman of Chioggia he still preserves his distinctive cheek and stocking.

This character comes to Venice to fling athwart no matter what piece his amusing reflections and his fantastic interludes. He is akin to the absent-minded Stenterello; he says very cunning things with the air of not knowing what he is saying; he begins a sentence to finish it in another act, or not to finish it at all, and he stares at the public, and even addresses it, always with the air of not perceiving its presence.

It may be said that when the actor entrusted with this rôle is equipped with talent and wit, he gives Zacometo a countenance proper to the people of the lagoons. He is more of an epicure than a glutton, more of a talker than a gallant with women; he is superbly lazy, yet capable of great vivacity,

displaying alternations between dreamy somnolence and sudden awakenings; in short, he displays the petulance and the agility of the cat. He fully portrays the nature of the *barcarolo*, who passes so promptly from slumber, his body dangling over the sleepy waters of the lagoon, to laughter, to jests and above all to the derision of strangers.

Zacometo has never quitted Venice, and if at times he is absent from the theatres of San Samuele or San Gallo, it is that he may go as a marionette to amuse the merchants and fishermen on the quay of the Schiavoni.

V

The character of JEANNOT, a rustic and stupid servant, who destroys by his transposition of words the sense of what he wishes to say to us, although believed to have been created in 1779 in the forain theatres by the actor Volange, is nevertheless a very ancient type. From *Zanni* the Florentine authors of the sixteenth century have created Gianni, Giannino, and Giannico, comedy servants.

From these come *Jeannin*, *Janin*, *Jennicot*, *Janicot*, *Janot*, comics of the French farces, who amused the public in the sixteenth century being coeval with *Jean-de-l'Epine*.

Jeannot (Giannino) reappears in the scenarii and pieces of the Comédie-Italienne at the end of the seventeenth century, and in the plays of Gherardi in which he performs several old man parts (1694).

All the world knows his nonsense (*janotismes*): he has sold more than a hundred trusses to a man of straw; he buys a loaf from a butter merchant:

" Moi, pour leur montrer mon adresse,
Je renversai les assiettes et les plats,
Je fis une tache sur ma veste, de graisse,
Sur ma culotte et mes jambes, de drap.
Et sur les bas que mon grand-père, de laine,
M'avait donnés avant d' mourir, violet.
Le pauv' cher homme est mort d'une migraine,
Tenant une cuisse dans sa bouche, de poulet."

This type scored its triumphs in the eighteenth century. Grimm writes of him as follows :—

" (May 1779.) A new spectacle, set up last year at the fair of Saint-Laurent, has been drawing for the past two months both the city and the court in consequence of the prodigious success of a sort of dramatic proverb whose subject it is not easy to expound. But it is impossible to forgo speaking of a work which has delighted all Paris, for which the masterpieces of Molière and Racine have been abandoned, and which, having reached its hundred-and-twelfth performance, is still drawing more than ever. The object of so great an enthusiasm, the idol of so rare and sustained an admiration, the man, in short, whom at this moment we may call the man of the nation, is a certain M. Jeannot who plays, it must be confessed, with the greatest truth, the part of a dolt, who is watered from a window like Don Japhet d'Arménie, who, upon the advice of his friends, goes to complain to the clerk of the commissary, who dupes him and who, after having fought with a view to avenging himself, is caught in the street by the watch, and finds himself in the end stripped of the little that he possessed ; all of which goes to prove very clearly without doubt that it is always *les battus qui payent l'amende.* This proverb which serves as a moral to the piece is also its title. The author to

whom we are indebted for so noble a production is M. Dorvigny. He has assembled into the rôle of Jeannot many features which, if already known, are none the less truly comical. As for the actor (le Sieur Volange), who has performed this rôle with so much success, he gives us more than hope. It is impossible to have a countenance more mobile and natural, inflexions of voice more varied and more exact, movements more simple and easy, or a gait more frank and naïve. The gentlemen of the chamber have already taken steps to bring about his appearance in a theatre more worthy of his glory."

In January of 1780, Grimm speaks again of Jeannot :

"Jeannot, or M. de Volange, that actor so famous on the boulevards, that unique man who throughout the whole of last summer was the admiration and delight of city and court, whose portrait was engraved in twenty different manners, and was to be found in Sevres china, on the overmantels of all our pretty women, or in wax modelled in the study of the Sieur Curtius, between M. de Voltaire and M. le Comte d'Estaing —this man in short, so rare and so honoured, has thought fit to develop his great talents in the theatre more worthy of his glory than the trestles of the Variétés Amusantes. He made his début on the 22nd February 1780, a date for ever memorable, on the stage of the Comédie-Italienne, in the rôles of the triplets of Colalto." (The three hunchbacks of Tabarin.) "Although on that day there were several other interesting spectacles, and notably the first performance of *Atys*, we cannot remember ever to have seen in any of our theatres on the most remarkable occasions, even during the triumph of

M. de Voltaire, such a concourse of spectators. There were as many people in the wings and in the corridors as in the pit and boxes, and it was necessary to turn away at the door a number far in excess of that which was admitted. What then was the success of a first appearance which attracted such extraordinary attention? Upon what depends the most brilliant of renowns? The object of so fine an enthusiasm, the idol of the boulevards, transported into this new temple, beholds there his honours tumbling about him and his glory eclipsed. It was in vain that the crowd of his adorers whom he had dragged after him never ceased to applaud him and to shout with emotion, 'Courage, Jeannot, courage!'

"The illusion was dissipated. The Roscius of the fair seemed here confounded in a crowd of the most ordinary actors. He was found to be out of countenance, his voice was harsh, his play not only common and trivial, but further, cold and destitute of humour. It would seem that his countenance and voice cannot lend themselves save to expressions of the lowest and most stupid; such a character he was able to portray with a very arresting naturalness, but it is the only character that fits him; in other rôles he has not even the merit of being a good caricature. Although this judgment was passed upon him at that first performance yet all Paris flocked to see him, and his mere début alone was the source of greater profit to the Comédie-Italienne than all the other novelties of the year put together. Oh, Athenians! This is not the first of your follies; and if the gods are propitious to you it will not be the last."

"I am not acquainted" (says Mademoiselle Clairon in her

memoirs) "with an actor in the forain shows known as Volange; but all Paris is unanimous on the subject of the perfection of his talent at the Variétés Amusantes. He was induced to appear at the Comédie-Italienne, where the work and the talent may perhaps not be compared with those of the Comédie-Française; but in that setting, this Volange, elsewhere so famous, was unable to sustain comparison with the least of the comedians."

vi

The modern Jocrisse, whom the Piedmontese and the Milanese seem to have copied from their Gianduja, and who seems to be a very recent personage, dates nevertheless from the seventeenth century, for in 1625 we see him parading the trestles in all his traditional stupidity. The same is the case with Gringalet who, in 1634, at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, played the parts of servant and served as interlocutor to Guillot-Gorgu when the latter desired to address the public.

Lajingeole, so well known in the marionette theatres, and in the nineteenth century restored to the proper stage in *L'Ours* and *Le Pacha*, also dates from the commencement of the reign of Louis XIII.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Boulevard du Temple had two famous dolts, Bobèche and Galimafré. Under his red coat and his grey three-cornered hat, surmounted by a butterfly, Bobèche was the king of farce. His reputation was colossal and his successes were very often due to coarse truths and to malicious allusions which several times earned him a reprimand from the police. Bobèche would

frequently perform at the houses of great lords, of ministers and of bankers. He toured the provinces and in the end undertook the management of a theatre at Rouen.

Galimafré never enjoyed the fame of Bobèche; he was rather a sort of Pagliaccio, and his talent was more appreciated by the lower orders, who preferred his heavy stupidities to the subtler malice of Bobèche. Galimafré left the theatre without, however, leaving the stage. He became a stage-hand at the Opéra-Comique. In that office he was frequently treated with disdain by those who did not know that this man who turned a frame or set up a wing had held a crowd in ecstasy before him.

XII

ISABELLE

We have seen that in the company of the very famous Ruzzante there existed an actress of the name of Fiorina, which may have been her own or assumed for the purposes of the theatre. This name was often bestowed by Ruzzante and many subsequent authors—such as Tarabosco in 1560 and Calmo in 1553—upon the leading lady. Now it is Fiora, the sweet village girl, so beautiful that Ruzzante is dying of love for her in his piece *La Fiorina*; now it is Fiorinetta, the courtesan apprentice whom love preserves from vice, and renders worthy of pardon.

This Fiorinetta is the Philenium of Demophilus and of Plautus, brought to light for the second time in the sixteenth century and transformed to suit the tastes of the Renaissance. It is very interesting to follow the transformation of this type. In the ancient theatre Philenium is no more than a courtesan in love. Argyrippus is certainly not her first lover, and probably will not be her last. She resigns herself to a division of her favours between father and son, after having lowered herself to flatter and to caress two slaves. She submits to all this vileness out of love for the young man.

Fiorinetta is interesting in a very different fashion, and Ruzzante's piece is better than that of Plautus. All the world knows the *Asinaria*, whilst Ruzzante's *Vaccaria* is almost unknown. We will give an outline of it. Like Demænetus,

Placido is a gentleman married to a rich wife who has kept the administration of her fortune, and who causes her revenues to be governed by a steward, modelled upon the dotal slave of the *Asinaria*. Placido complains to his servant Truffo (the Libanus of Plautus) that he has spent his life in tutelage, and that he is still a *uomo fresco*—that is to say, a dashing fellow, addicted to pleasure, who in the midst of opulence has never been able to enjoy anything. Madonna Rospina deprived him of everything, and, through the authority of her virtue, becomes the torment of the house and the family.

"I am not ignorant," he says, "of the fact that my son Flavio is in love with Fiorinetta, and that he has been living with her for a year. I am not at all perturbed; it is the best possible liaison. He is too young to marry. I want him to settle down as late as possible. May God preserve him from such an existence as mine. Let him profit by his youth. Fiorinetta is not, thank God, a woman of religious inclinations, the most dangerous form of mistress that exists; nor is she a married woman, which again is a source of danger when the husband is jealous; she is a child who loves him tenderly and who will admit no other lovers. But her mother is a procuress who wants to sell her daughter to the rich Polidoro because my son has no more money to give her. Myself, I have no money. My wife keeps everything under lock and key, and her steward is incorruptible. It is necessary, my dear Truffo, that you should exercise your arts to rob me—that is to say, to purloin from my wife the sum necessary to my son so that for a year to come he may not be troubled in the exclusive possession of his mistress.

"Go, then, my dear Truffo. You have my authority for any knavery. I am not one of those grumbling and turbulent old men who proceed in such a way as to cause their death to be desired. I wish to be my son's best friend and to do for him what in other days my father did for me."

Fiorinetta loves Flavio. She loves him ingenuously and with all her soul. She does not say, like Philenium to Cleæretu: "Permit me to prefer him to all my lovers." She says: "I want no lover other than himself."

FIORINETTA. What do you want of me, mother?

CELEGA. You have again, to my misfortune, allowed Flavio to enter the house by the garden gate. I did not wish to say anything to you in his presence. But answer me now: Is it possible that you do not wish to believe what I have told you? You know nevertheless that what I tell you is always true. When for the first time you received the caresses of Flavio of which you were afraid, having never received those of any man, I told you not to fear. Did I deceive you, seeing that you find yourself so much in love with him?

FIORINETTA. It is more than true, my mother.

CELEGA. Very well, then, why do you not heed me now when I tell you not to allow him to come again? Since he has nothing more to give us he will ruin you.

FIORINETTA. Because I am unable to send him away in this fashion. Because loving him I do not wish to hurt him by leaving him. It is as if someone were to bid me to cease loving you as my mother. That were impossible.

CELEGA. It is a fine thing if you contrast the affection you bear your mother to that of a lover. I shall be compelled, until you become a great lady, to go and beg, for the simple reason that your lover will not turn his steps elsewhere. You think he loves you? It is the pleasure that you give him that he loves and not yourself! With me it is different.

FIORINETTA. He would weep too much, he would sigh too

much. He has so often sworn to love me. He has spoken so many promises.

CELEGA. Tears and sighs are very light proofs of love, and oaths are always on the lips of lovers. I have never known tears and sighs and oaths to proceed from any but those who have nothing to give. Those who spend do not weep. You wish to please Flavio and to belong to him alone. It is all very well, my daughter, for a rich woman to have one only lover; but you are not in such case.

FIORINETTA. Since he has been good to me in the past must I be ungrateful to him?

CELEGA. The past is as nothing. But let us suppose then that Flavio loves you. Do you think, perchance, that things will always remain as they are? You are deceived. As soon as your countenance begins to change so will his ideas change.

FIORINETTA. Oh! I have no fear of that.

CELEGA. That which we do not fear comes more quickly than that which we do fear. Consider now: what do you find lacking in Messer Polidoro that a rich man should have?

FIORINETTA. He is ugly and unpleasant. I have never seen a more hideous face.

CELEGA. He is so rich that his wealth conceals all his faults. I can think of nothing uglier and more unpleasant than a man without money.

FIORINETTA. He is diseased.

CELEGA. Now there's a misfortune! When a young man is seen to be a little pale, with a scratch in his leg or a lump on his arm one cries at once: He is ill! But I shall not say another word. Do as you please and you shall always be a poor unfortunate; do as I tell you and you shall soon be rich and a great lady. Look at Nina, who a little time ago was going barefoot and in rags through taverns and other disreputable places, and who to-day is the owner of so many silken gowns and so many collars of pearls, and has so many servants to do her will.

FIORINETTA. Have patience. The next time that Flavio comes I will talk of it with him.

CELEGA. Fool! Know that if you persist in loving him who has nothing to give you, all the others will be equally close. Our future lies in competition. I have already told you a hundred times what you should do. Should anyone present you with a necklace, a ring or anything else, show it immediately to all, so that another, not desiring to seem less rich, shall make you a present of greater value. It is necessary to know how to receive each and how to talk with everyone so as to lead all to suppose that you are in love with them.

FIORINETTA. You want me to love all the world as I love Flavio?

CELEGA. I did not say love all, but pretend to do so.

FIORINETTA. My mother, that were too painful a life. I could never pretend the contrary of what I feel and of what is in my heart. I think that it is better to marry, and I wish to lead a purer exstence than that which you suggest.

In a later scene between Fiorinetta and her lover, she shows herself as passionate as she was meek and gentle with her mother.

FLAVIO. Why do you not let me go, dear heart? Why do you retain me? Is it so as to increase the pain which I must experience when I leave you?

FIORINETTA. Can you believe that I am anxious to let my soul depart from me?

FLAVIO. Mine will remain with you, for you are the asylum of all its joys and all its happiness.

FIORINETTA. How can it remain with me since I no longer exist without Flavio?

FIAVIO. Nevertheless your mother wishes to separate us.

FIORINETTA. I may occasion grief to my mother, but nothing shall separate me from you.

FLAVIO. When this new lover stands before you with all his money your sentiments will change, perhaps.

FIORINETTA. Flavio, you must not say such things to me. Not all the gold in the world could suffice to change my

sentiments towards you. My heart is not for sale like merchandise in the open market, and if the love which I bear you were not sufficient to cause me to persevere in my purpose, my mother's project would be. She wishes to separate me from you—from you, the only thing in all the world that I love! She shall not long rejoice in the possession of me, I shall stab myself to the heart or otherwise rid myself of life.

FLAVIO. No, you must live. Let me die, for if I were deprived of you I should be deprived of life's greatest happiness. Joys and pleasures shall never be wanting in your life.

FIORINETTA. You want me to live, but existence without you would be worse than death. Tell me what pleasure could be a pleasure for me without Flavio? What joy could be a joy, what delight could be a delight for me without you?

FLAVIO. If in my death there were not the death of every hope of seeing you again, which is the greatest good of all, know, my heart, that no one would die more gladly than I, able to glorify himself in dying of love for the most beautiful woman nature ever created.

FIORINETTA. If I should ever happen to survive you, Flavio, know that my life would be so bitter and full of torments that death must seem a sweet thing by comparison. But, so that it shall not be said that I should ever experience any other pleasure after your death, I should make an effort to live and to prolong this miserable existence so that my sufferings should compensate me a little for the loss of a lover as dear as you. Listen, Flavio, render me the most pious service in your power, take your sword and pass it through my heart. Life is dear to me only on your account, it belongs to you, it is your thing: if you want to die, bear it with you.

FLAVIO. Oh! beloved lady, if rather I could but join my soul to yours so as to make but one! Gladly would I strip myself of life to give it to you. Would not that be the best use to which it could be put?

FIORINETTA. You increase my happiness and my life by attaching your lips to mine.

FLAVIO. Delicious lips! Am I unfortunate enough?

FIORINETTA. Hold your Fiorinetta in your arms, my Flavio! . . . Flavio, I am dying. . . . Help!

Vezzo and Truffo run on to assist in restoring her to consciousness; but Vezzo says that he has no rose-water, and Truffo, who has sold his shoes to keep Celega quiet with the money, is unable to buy any.

FLAVIO. Listen, Fiorinetta, my beloved: is this a proof of the love you say you bear me, this desire to be the first to die? Why do you not open your loving eyes? Do not conceal from me the light of my life. Is it not enough already that I should have to weep for my own misfortunes without your increasing them? Fiorinetta! You do not answer your Flavio! Answer me!

Truffo and Vezzo run from side to side seeking something by means of which to restore her to consciousness. Truffo suddenly shouts: "Return to life, we have the money!" Flavio, happy to know that they have been able to purloin from the steward the money which is to appease Celega and render them both happy, says: "We have no further reason to be sorrowful—do you hear? They have brought the money."

FIORINETTA. Beautiful heaven! Where am I?

FLAVIO. In the arms of your Flavio.

FIORINETTA. Flavio, why do you not let me die? I should die so happily in your arms!

Truffo and Vezzo reflect upon the fact that money is more potent than rose-water to conquer swoons.

FLAVIO (*to* FIORINETTA). Take courage, my life, my love. In spite of adverse fortune we shall be happier than ever. (*To the servants.*) But which of you two has the money?

In Plautus's play, Libanus and Leonida, the two cunning slaves, compelled the young couple to desire the money for some time. The result is a burlesque scene of an incredible coarseness, in which the master is compelled to embrace the knees of one of his slaves and to bear the other on his shoulders. Philenium is condemned to caress them, which does not seem to cost her any very great effort, for she herself offers them her kisses, and is spontaneously prodigal of the most tender epithets.

Fiorinetta is too chaste, and Flavio too seriously enamoured to admit of this. The scene is no less comical in consequence of a long and very humorous story related in dialect and as a duet by Vezzo and Truffo, whose only purpose is to render the two lovers impatient. In the end, after having appeared to doubt the word of his young master, Vezzo exacts that he shall tenderly embrace his mistress by way of an inviolable oath. Thereafter he considers himself assured of his master's protection in the dangers he has incurred to serve him.

In the *Asinaria*, Demænetus, the father of the lover, demands and obtains the favours of Philenium as the price of his complacence. The young man consents to it to ensure the continuance of his pleasures. The old man's cross-grained wife surprises this orgy, trounces the son and threatens the father, whilst driving him off with blows. It is a scene of gross realism.

Ruzzante is also a realist. He calls things by their names and does not cloak the brutal and licentious morals of his day. But he belongs to the Renaissance ; his spirit tends to the ideal, and he completes the destiny ot the courtesan by a fifth act of his own creation, which is certainly the best of the piece.

After having ably softened the monstrosities of the ancient text so as to preserve that which is comical—as for instance turning the old man's desire for the courtesan into a simple pleasantry, so that it may serve as a lesson to his son, and making the son's submission no more than a feint, with the mental reservation to withdraw Fiorinetta in time from this opprobrium—Ruzzante enters into romantic developments.

The mother of Flavio, Madonna Rospina, pauses on the threshold of the house of Celega at the moment of blazing out. She recovers her self-possession, and with great prudence and dignity accuses herself of being the cause of all the evil. She has been wanting in indulgence and liberality ; she has driven her son to despair, her husband to vice and her servants to theft. She goes to Celega, and shows her so much gentleness and pity that this miserable woman repents her, and withdraws to a convent, after having confessed that Fiorinetta is not her daughter, but a child fallen into her hands during the fortunes and turmoil of war. The wars to which she alludes are those of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. Thus we behold Fiorina purged of this sordid relationship with Celega, and the effect of her constancy is to bear good fruit in the forgiveness of the mother of her lover and the repentance of her own supposed mother. The manner in which Celega excuses herself for her evil designs is arresting :

Celega. Know, lady, that under pressure of the miseries of life good thoughts frequently disappear. That is the fault of fortune which with reason is said to be blind. I say this for myself, who, not that I might become rich, but so that I might avoid the horrors of want, have done what has been seen. Nevertheless when this child fell into my hands, I had

nothing but good will for her. But the little care shown by the great and powerful for the poor in the world wrought a change in me. And then the might of the great misleads us ; we don't know how to refuse them what they exact. What could I do to preserve this child from a cavalier as great and as noble as your son ?

Celega disappears and Madonna Rospina calls her son : " It would be impossible," she says, " for me not to be anxious whilst knowing you to be wandering about in this carnival time. Go seek your mistress, and conduct her to our house. Later on you shall learn the good intentions that I have in mind."

Flavio. I know now that there is no love like that of a mother. Oh, mother ! mother ! in what language, in what words should I be able to please you as you deserve !

Here follows an excellent scene, in the highest degree amusing, between Placido and Rospina, the father and mother of Flavio. The husband rejoices in the happy change which has taken place in his wife. He says that the most favourable things are those which are least expected.

Rospina. You are right, Placido ; for who could have foreseen a thousand years ago that Flavio would have married a wife to-day ?

Placido. What are you saying ?

Rospina. Very soon you shall see Fiorinetta here to celebrate the wedding.

Placido. And you would consent to such a thing ?

Rospina. Why not ?

Placido. Do you consider her a suitable wife for our son ?

Rospina. I have heard you say that given that a woman were suited to rejoice the soul of her husband, she should be chosen without regard to her birth.

Placido. But this girl has no dowry.

Rospina. How often have I not heard you curse those who

seek a great dowry, and who thereby bind themselves in cords that deprive them of their liberty ?

PLACIDO. That was said only in jest.

ROSPINA. But Flavio has taken it seriously.

PLACIDO. And will you suffer this ?

ROSPINA. I shall do by him as I have seen you do.

PLACIDO. Do so then ; but as for me, I shall never give my consent to it.

ROSPINA. You will, and you will even go so far as to open the nuptial ball if necessary.

PLACIDO. Not so. I shall withdraw to the country during the event.

ROSPINA. Come, put a good face on the matter, and rejoice in the thought of the happy days that are to come.

PLACIDO. You will have it so ? Very well then, so be it !

A great ball is given, and the piece concludes with songs and dances.

This *Vaccaria* of Ruzzante is extremely remarkable, especially since discarding all the ancient grossness of the *Asinaria* he has been able to extract from it a romantic and amusing piece invested with a humour more naïve and more natural than that of the original. In the story of Fiorinetta brought up in evil by Celega and becoming, by virtue of her sentiments, her constancy and sincerity, the legitimate wife of the handsome Flavio, one might perceive the rehabilitation of the courtesan. But one would be at fault. Fiorinetta is not, and never has been, a courtesan, especially a courtesan of that epoch. She has neither the ways nor the sentiments of one. A trafficker contrives that in spite of herself she shall make the acquaintance of a man. He was young, handsome, lovable and sincerely enamoured. She becomes attached to him ; she would have died rather than belong to another. Madonna Rospina,

in marrying her to her son, did no more than restore the honour which her son had taken from the girl. The mother of Flavio would never have received the ancient courtesan Philenium into her house.

The costume of Fiorinetta must have been very beautiful and in the best of taste. It was an age in which refinements of toilet filled the most important place in the life of a woman. "I know perfectly," says Isotta in *L'Anconitana* of Ruzzante, "how to embroider collars in gold and silk. I know how to dress a lady, and what colours are more advantageous to dark women and to blondes; also what garments are best attuned to go with liveries and devices. I know what colours signify love, hope, jealousy and other things of the same kind. I know how the *faldigie* are to be worn, how the fringed headdress suits best, whether it conceals all the hair, whether it leaves an inch or two displayed; I know what women are enhanced by earrings, and whether it is better to wear pearls or plain gold in girdles and rings, as well as the different kinds of corset to render the appearance of the throat more delicate, or more or less to display the breast. I know what collars, carcanets, gold chains and strands of pearls render a woman more imposing. I also know the kinds of rings to adorn the fingers; how a woman should walk, how she should laugh, turn her eyes, drop a curtsy, and what movements denote grace and modesty; how to adorn the dress of the woman of fashion, how to combine fabrics of different colours so as to obtain the richest effect. Some women wear their hair hidden, or combed in so level a manner that each hair lies beside its fellow; others wear it in a sort of disorder which renders them more graceful and more beautiful, etc."

The taste of the Renaissance was, more than that of any other age, based upon an imitation of the Greeks and the Romans. The actresses did not wear the dresses of their own time save under pressure in contemporary pieces. All comédies which were a few years old became *ancient*, and were represented in the ancient manner—that is to say, in fancy costumes such as are to be seen in the pictures by painters of this epoch.

Rabelais relates, in his *Sciomachie*, that in Rome, in 1569, amid the noblemen, the men-at-arms and the footmen and horsemen who took part in a tournament, Diana and her nymphs suddenly make their appearance to play a little scene which concludes in the pretended abduction of a nymph by some soldiers. Diana claims her from the soldiers; enclosed in a cardboard citadel, these refuse; thereupon Diana and her nymphs go to demand the assistance and vengeance of the knights. The assault is given, and the spectacle commences.

"Diana bore upon her head a silver crescent; her golden hair hung about her shoulders and some of it dressed round her head with a laurel garland 'introphiated' with roses, violets and other flowers. She was dressed in crimson damask, richly embroidered, with a fine Cyprian fabric of beaten gold, curiously pleated like the rochet of a cardinal, descending to the middle of her leg, and over this a rare and precious leopard skin attached by golden buttons to her left shoulder. Her golden boots were cut *à la nymphale* and tied with silver cord. Her ivory horn hung upon her left arm. Her quiver, preciously adorned with pearls, was suspended from her right shoulder by a thick cord in strands of white and scarlet silk.

In her right hand she carried a silver javelin. The other nymphs differed but little from her in accoutrements save that they had no silver crescent on their brows. Each one carried a very beautiful Turkish bow in her hands, and a quiver like Diana's. Some wore upon their shoulders African skins of lynx and marten, others led greyhounds in leash or blew their horns. It was a lovely sight."

In the troupe of the *Intronati* (1530 to 1560), the leading ladies, whose real names we ignore, appeared under the names of Lelia, Beatrice and Isabella. In 1570, the beautiful Armiani, born at Vicenza, a poetess, a musician and a comedienne of talent, was becoming celebrated throughout Italy. The *Confidenti* troupe, which went to France in 1572, had for leading lady an actress of beauty and endowed with great literary talents. This was Celia, whose real name was Maria Malloni. The Cavaliere Marino surnames her in *L'Adone* "a fourth Grace," and Pietro Pinelli composed in remembrance of her an entire volume of poems: *Corona di lodi alla Signora Maria Malloni, detta Celia, comica.* She played equally well in the Commedia dell' Arte and in *commedia sostenuta*, in tragedy and in pastoral. She was chiefly remarkable, according to Count Ridolfo, in the rôle of Silvia in *L'Aminta.*

At about the same time, the *Gelosi* troupe possessed for leading lady "the beautiful and too tender Lidia di Bagnacavallo," says M. Charles Magnin. "Her jealous and but little disguised passion for her fellow-actor Adriano Valerini caused some little scandal, a rare thing at this time when actresses prided themselves upon nothing so much as their virtue."

ii

In 1578, Flaminio Scala engaged in the troupe of the *Gelosi*, then in Florence, a young girl born in Padua in 1562, named Isabella, then barely sixteen years of age, beautiful, full of talent and very virtuous. Francesco Andreini, who was playing Captains in the same company, fell in love with her and married her. In the following year (1579), Isabella gave birth to a son, Giovanni-Battista Andreini (*Lelio*).

It was first under the name of Accesa that Isabella was admired and applauded when she made her début and was elected a member of the academy of the *Intenti* of Pavia. She was the most celebrated actress of her time, and honoured by the most illustrious approbation, such as that of Tasso, Ciabrera, and Marino, not to mention cardinals, princes and sovereigns. A crowned portrait of Isabella was placed between those of Petrarch and Tasso in a fête given in her honour in Rome by one of her greatest admirers, the Cardinal Aldobrandini.

Isabella was the soul, the honour, the pillar of the *Gelosi* company. She went to France with the troupe in 1584, and there, as in Italy, Isabella, then in her twenty-second year, achieved the same degree of distinction by her modest and reserved conduct as by the versatility of her talents, and the same was again the case when she revisited France, summoned thither by Henri IV. in 1600.

Thomas Garzon says in his *Place Universelle* :

"The graceful Isabella Andreini, the most brilliant ornament of the stage and the theatre, as praiseworthy for her virtue as for her beauty, has rendered so illustrious her

profession that as long as the world shall last, and down to the end of time, the name of the famous Isabella Andreini will be held in veneration."

Notwithstanding the most flattering attempts to detain her, Isabella left Paris. Compelled by an accident to interrupt her journey at Lyons, she died there in childbirth on the 10th July 1604. The greatest honours were paid her. Pierre Mathieu relates the event in his *Histoire de France sous le Regne de Henri III.* (Paris, 1609); and Nicolo Barbieri (Beltrame), who was a member of the company, tells us that the municipality of the city of Lyons honoured the funeral of the comedienne with marks of distinction. "The aldermen," says M. Charles Magnin, "sent the banners of the city and the mace-bearers to the obsequies of this great actress, and the guild of merchants followed the procession with torches. Francesco Andreini, the husband of this famous woman, caused an epitaph to be engraved upon her tomb which is to be read in Mazuchelli, and which may yet exist in Lyons, where it was still to be seen at the end of the eighteenth century. This epitaph concludes in the following terms:—"*Religiosa, pia, musis amica et artis scenicæ caput, hic resurrectionem exspectat . . .*"

A beautiful medal was struck, bearing the effigy of Isabella Andreini, her name being followed by the letters C.G., which stand for *Comica Gelosa* (comedienne of the *Gelosi* troupe), and bearing on the obverse the figure of Fame with the words "*Æterna Fama.*" She had deserved all these distinctions not only by the wealth of imagination which she displayed in the Commedia dell' Arte, but by various publications from her pen, some in verse and some in prose. During her various sojourns

in Paris, the last of which was in 1603, she conquered the admiration of both court and city, and enjoyed a very particular favour with Marie de' Médicis and Henri IV.

She has left us some sonnets, madrigals and songs, *La Pastorale de Myrtille*, printed at Verona in 1588, and a *Canzonniere* printed in Milan in 1601. With her died the *Gelosi* troupe.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the leading ladies of the various Italian troupes were Renemia, Lucia, Pandolfina, Lucrezia and Virginia.

Lavinia, whose real name was Diana Ponti, *comica desiosa*, an actress and poetess (1580), discovered, according to Riccoboni, among the effects inherited from her father—a comedian like herself—a large number of scenarii bearing the precious autograph signature of Saint Charles Borromeo. The explanation of this curious fact is as follows :—Adriano Valerini had been called to Milan. Notwithstanding the tolerance shown to comedians by the Italian clergy, the governor of the city, having fallen a prey to some scruple of conscience, ordered the suspension of the performances by the troupe under Valerini's management. Valerini protested. The governor submitted the matter to the decision of the archbishop, who was Charles Borromeo. The good prelate summoned the comedian into his presence, questioned him, heard him and permitted him to reopen his theatre on condition that he would submit to him his scenarii. Those which he approved he signed with his own hand. One of the greatest saints of the church reading and approving the scenarii of the Commedia dell' Arte is a fact as significant as it is striking. Nicolo Barbieri (Beltrame) says in his *Discorso* that Braga, the Pantaloon of the company of

Valerini, as well as the Pedrolino, still possessed in his day (1634) manuscripts approved and signed by Saint Charles Borromeo.

In 1601, Virginia Ramponi filled the rôles of leading lady in the *Gelosi* troupe. G. B. Andreini fell in love with her and married her in 1601. He wrote for her his first piece under the title of *Florinda* in consequence of the name which she bore in the theatre. She died somewhere about 1634.

In the French company at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, an Italian actress was playing in 1617, under the Gallicised name of Florentine, the rôles of leading lady, and the daughters of Gros-Guillaume.

In the *Fedeli* troupe, in 1624, Margarita Luciani, the wife of Girolamo Gavarini (Captain Rhinoceros), died a few days after her husband, and as devoutly as he.

In 1635, Lidia, an actress of great merit, was the second wife of G. B. Andreini, the director of the company.

In 1652, Eularia Coris, a young and charming comedienne, was one of the last actresses to sustain by her talent the weakening vogue of the *Fedeli* troupe. She contributed, with Lidia, to the success of a devout dramatic piece entitled *La Maddalena Lasciva e Penitente*, performed for the first time in 1607.

"The list of characters is curious," says M. Charles Magnin; "beside Magdalen, Martha and Lazarus, the principal parts are those of the Archangel Michael, several angels, Divine Grace, three lovers of Magdalen, her page, her waiting-woman, her seneschal, her cook, two dwarfs and three old women of ill repute. In the first three acts there is no question of anything but gallantry and merry-making. Magdalen, abandoned

absolutely to her senses, closes her ears to the wise counsels of Martha her sister. In the third act, penitent and contrite, she renounces pleasure, assumes a hair-shirt, is favoured by ecstatic visions, and finally ascends to heaven, borne in the arms of five cherubims, whilst the Archangel Michael and Divine Grace exhort the audience to follow the example of this reconciled sinner."

Agata Calderoni, known under the name of Flaminia in Italy, was the grandmother of Virginia Baletti, the wife of Riccoboni (Lelio), and she took the theatre name of Flaminia, which had become hereditary in the family.

iii

"Is it you, AURELIA—beautiful Aurelia?—you, whose riches are your least attraction, and heaven alone knows how rich you are! You, whose beauty and goodness match your wealth and generosity, deign to answer me, O my hope, my future! Deign to accept my services! Permit me to follow you that I may read in your eyes your least desire! Command of me all that it is humanly possible to do! I deliver myself up to you, body and soul; I am your slave."

Aurelia replies: "Are you Horace? No! You are not the man I love, who will be my slave only in becoming my master. Withdraw, I must not listen to you! If you are come to demand of me nothing but my love, I answer you that you may claim of me any other alms but not that of my heart."

Whilst in Italy the rôles of leading lady were being inter-

preted by Orsola Bianchi, born in Venice, they were being filled in France by her sister, Brigida Bianchi, known by the name of Aurelia. She went to Paris in 1640 with Tiberio Fiurelli, left it in the following year, to return again in 1645, with her father, Giuseppe Bianchi, the director of the troupe, her sisters Luigia and Orsola and her husband, Marco Romagnesi.

In 1659 Aurelia wrote a piece, *L'Inganno Fortunato*, which she dedicated to the queen-mother. The queen-mother found the piece to her taste and conveyed her thanks to Aurelia in the shape of a present consisting of a pair of diamond earrings of exquisite workmanship, said by Loret to be worth three hundred pistoles.

Aurelia left Paris at the end of June of 1659, but was absent only a year. Upon learning of the death of Romagnesi, her husband, she returned there in 1660, re-entered the theatre and did not retire until 1683. She remained in Paris after going into retirement; she resided in the Rue Saint-Denis, near the convent of the great Saint-Chaumont, where she passed away at the age of ninety, in 1703.

She was a very beautiful woman, with great taste in dress, and passionately addicted to her toilet. Mademoiselle Belmont, the wife of Romagnesi de Belmont (Léandre), her grandson, says that she found her upon her deathbed beautifully dressed in the very latest mode.

Aurelia had been very much beloved by Anne of Austria; like Scaramouche she was admitted to the intimacy of the queen.

Orsola Corteze, known in the theatre under the name of Eularia, made her début in Paris in 1660 at the age of twenty-three. Her mother, Barbara Corteze, known under the name

of Florinda, claimed for her husband descent from Hernando Cortez, the conqueror of Mexico. Orsolo Corteze married Giuseppe-Domenico Biancolelli (Harlequin), at Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, and bore him twelve children.

"She was tall and well made without being beautiful; and of an extremely amiable disposition." She undertook the parts of leading lady after the retirement of Aurelia, and remained in the theatre until 1680. In 1704 she withdrew to Montargis, to the convent of the Sisters of the Visitation of Mary, and died there in 1718 at the age of eighty-six.

iv

Françoise-Marie-Apolline Biancolelli, the daughter of the famous Harlequin Domenico Biancolelli and of Orsola Corteze, was born in Paris in 1664, and made her first appearance there in 1683 in the rôles of leading lady, under the *nom de guerre* of ISABELLE. At the same time her younger sister undertook the parts of soubrette under the name of Columbine.

"Never" (says Devizé) "was the Comédie-Italienne so applauded as it is now. If Harlequin is inimitable in the various rôles in which he is to be seen performing, his two daughters are no less so; the various characters which they play are so admirably rendered that they have earned the applause of all Paris, which never wearies of admiring them. Never has one beheld so much intelligence for comedy combined with so much youth. There is no part undertaken by them of which they do not acquit themselves with such a grace that when they appear upon the stage it almost seems

that they must have been born solely for the character which they represent."

The following monologue from Gherardi presents a resumé of the dominant character of the Isabella type:

"Sirs, in the deplorable state into which gallantry has fallen, it is not surprising that a woman should be compelled to uphold the cause of all her sisters. Our sex might wait long and in vain for the other to undertake the task of avenging it. Since taverns and tobacco-shops have become so fashionable women have ceased to please; and love, powerful though he be, is unable in the minds of young men to offer adequate compensation for the fatuous and brutal pleasure of a debauch at *l'Alliance* or *la Galère.*

"Where are the days when the fair sex beheld the flower of youth assiduously at its feet?—those days which might rightly be called the golden age of tenderness, when hearts came in squadrons to reconnoitre our power! In those happy days none was sure of conquering us, and banishment followed quickly upon the least wrong that should be done us. But the face of things is changed. We no longer behold at this time of day a thousand indefatigable adventurers ready to sustain our cause against all the world; and love, which in other times was a source of riches to our sex, is to-day no more than a source of ruin.

"It is not in our century that you must seek those magnificent heroines who came forward to repair, at the price of their jewels, the most cruel desolations of war, and thus to place themselves side by side with the most famous conquerors. Gallantry to-day is no longer recognisable, or else

it haggles even in the matter of little favours; and far from stripping oneself of everything in the service of love, one's heart is given only with reservations. But that which has most contributed to decry gallantry is the unworthy profanation of our attractions by uniting us daily to imbecile old men, members of a nation which in all times has been contemned by the kingdom of love. These bizarre matches, which avarice suggests to our parents, open the door to innumerable abuses. They constitute a nursery for separations, and a clear source of profit to so many coquettish abbés who are everlastingly lying in wait for marriages of this description.

"Is it credible that there should be girls so innocent as to accept without vexation these changes in the matter of marriage? And is not the sweet idea of matrimony which we form for ourselves incompatible with the austerities to which bespectacled husbands would subject us? Are we not aware that Hymen's is a sort of warfare from which old men and children are disqualified? What sort of a figure can an old dodderer be expected to cut under the banner of Hymen, or rather what sort of a figure can a young girl be expected to cut beside a husband who catechises her at every hour, who counts the steps she takes, who does not open his lips save to contradict her or to beguile her with tales of his bygone prowess? a sour-faced fellow who accounts the addition of a ribbon to his wife's headdress as a crime, and who sets questions to his servants on the score of the most innocent movements of his better half? I do not even touch upon that legion of infirmities of which old age is the prey, nor the unbearable cough which is the music to which an old man invariably

treats his young wife. You are not to suppose that I do not see something heroic in the sad fidelity of which a woman has the courage to pride herself towards husbands of this kind, but it is necessary that I should frankly confess my own weakness. In a similar extremity I could answer only for a stony inflexibility never to depart from the hatred which at the outset I must conceive for any old man who should dare to attempt my liberty."

When she is in love she recoils before nothing to disembarrass herself of the fetters imposed upon her by the paternal will:

ISABELLE (*dressed as a man, before the mirror adjusting her cravat*). Give me that hat, Pierrot. Do you find in me a cavalier to your taste?

PIERROT. Pardi, mademoiselle, you are charming. You might be mistaken for me. Yet there is a little difference. Are you going to raise a company of infantry?

ISABELLE. Do not think to mock me. I should not tremble more than another under fire.

PIERROT. If all captains were of your kind they might save enlisting expenses and produce their own soldiers.

ISABELLE. I do not assume this costume without reason. You know that my father wants me to marry M. Bassinet.

PIERROT. Your father? Good! He is a drivelling old fool, as I have told him.

ISABELLE. I am making use of this disguise to avoid that marriage. M. Bassinet has never seen me. He is coming to pay me a visit, and I shall await him in this apparel. I am going to give him news of Isabelle, and—by heaven!—I shall quench his desire to marry her.

PIERROT. Mordi, now, there's a daring girl! I have always told your father that I never believed he was your mother's husband when you were born. You have too much spirit. Don't you think so?

ISABELLE. Oh, as for me, Pierrot, that does not trouble me. I am concerned only to put an end, if I can, to this impertinent marriage by which I am threatened. But here comes, I think, M. Bassinet. Leave me with him; I shall play my part.

PIERROT (*going off*). Pardi, it is the man himself. He looks like an old boar.

ISABELLE (*seats herself nonchalantly in an arm-chair. The Doctor enters*). Your servant, sir; your servant.

THE DOCTOR (*perceiving* ISABELLE, *and mistaking her for a man*). Sir, I beg your pardon. I was told that Mademoiselle Isabelle was in her chamber. (*Aside.*) What the devil's this coxcomb doing here?

ISABELLE. Sir, she is not here, and I am awaiting her. But you, sir, what do you seek? Is mademoiselle ill? From your countenance I take you to be a doctor, and you have all the appearances of a member of the faculty.

THE DOCTOR. You are not mistaken, sir. I am a nursling of Hippocrates. But I am not here to feel the pulse of Isabelle. My pretensions are quite otherwise.

ISABELLE. Indeed. And of what nature, pray, are the pretensions of a doctor towards a young girl?

THE DOCTOR. I seek to marry her.

ISABELLE (*laughing*). Ah! ah! ah!

THE DOCTOR. You find it droll?

ISABELLE. Not at all; but it is that . . . ah! ah! ah! I laugh like that sometimes, ah! ah! ah!

THE DOCTOR (*considering himself in a mirror*). Is my face dirty?

ISABELLE. No, I am just laughing. Ah! ah! ah! . . . Tell me, sir, in determining to take so perilous a leap, I hope that you have properly sounded yourself? You have not, perchance, discovered any little headache, eh? You understand me?

THE DOCTOR. Not at all, sir. I am very well. I am not subject to headaches.

ISABELLE (*placing her hand upon his brow*). My faith! You

will be able to wear them very well, and I would as soon that you should marry that girl as another.

THE DOCTOR. And so would I.

ISABELLE. But when she is your wife do not spoil her by your ridiculous manners. We have had a good deal of trouble to bring her to her present state. I shall be accounted among your friends, and I intend when you are married to come to you without ceremony to eat your capon.

THE DOCTOR. Sir, you do me too much honour, but I never eat poultry. From what I hear, you are perfectly acquainted with the lady in question ?

ISABELLE. Our acquaintance does not date from yesterday, and if you are discreet I can tell you something concerning her which I am sure you do not know.

THE DOCTOR. Oh, you can tell me everything and depend upon my discretion. You know that doctors——

ISABELLE. I spend . . . but I must take care that no one overhears us . . . I spend every night in her chamber.

THE DOCTOR (*stupefied*). In her chamber ?

ISABELLE. In her chamber, and I could even tell you—— But you are sure to talk ?

THE DOCTOR. No, no, I swear it !

ISABELLE. Last night my head reposed upon the same pillow. Draw your own conclusions from that.

THE DOCTOR. On the same pillow ?

ISABELLE. And it will be the same again to-morrow. Still, what I have told you should not hinder you from carrying through the affair. A real lover is not to be put off by trifles.

THE DOCTOR. Trifles ! Fine trifles ! After all, nothing presses yet in the matter of this marriage. Farewell, sir. Heaven has befriended me. Here is a young man who loves me. (*Exit.*)

ISABELLE. I think that his vapours of love for Isabelle are over now. In the quarter of an hour during which I have played the man, I have been a fairly complete rascal.

The rôles of Isabelle are usually purely comedy ones. It

is no part of her business to affect her audience or even to engross it. She is concerned to enliven the stage with her satires, her fantasies and her wit. She speaks like a man, and she has the knowledge, the audacity and the self-assertion of one.

ISABELLE. Do you not know, Columbine, that prose is the very offal of wit, and that a single madrigal can infuse more tenderness into a heart than thirty of the best-balanced periods? It is only the very base who do not love poets to the point of folly. Ah, Columbine! how charming is a man when he offers us his vows after having passed them through the sieve of the Muses. How is one to resist the declaration when it strikes the ear in rhythm, and when its imagery forces sensibility into the wildest and most rebellious soul? What joy, Columbine, to rejoice the heart with these ingenious novelites that enclose a deal of passion in very little space. Oh, the happy talent to be able to restrict your movements and thoughts to the feet and measures prescribed by poetry!

COLUMBINE. Do you realise, mademoiselle, that such feet might lead you straight to the Petites-Maisons! Wit is all very well, but something else is needed in marriage. Waiting-woman though I be, I would not take a poet either to lover or to husband. What profit is there in being the wife of a rhymer? Is a room to be furnished with epigrams? Is a butcher to be paid with sonnets? My faith! if I were in your place I should throw myself at some good financier, who would cause my merit to roll in a coach, and who——

ISABELLE. A financier! Horror!

Françoise Biancolelli, although not endowed with great beauty, had a "gift of pleasing spread over all her person." She was full of grace, very well made and had a physiognomy that was sweet and charming. M. de Turgis, an officer in the Gardes-Françaises, fell madly in love with her and married

her in 1691. She was twenty-seven years of age and her husband was twenty-one. The father and mother of M. de Turgis entered in 1693 a plaint against their daughter-in-law, accusing her of the subornation of their son. The mother of Françoise Biancolelli, in her ignorance of the laws of France and to defeat the parents of her daughter's husband in their plaint, announced to them that between her daughter and their son there existed no convention, treaty or celebration of marriage. In 1694, the father and mother of M. de Turgis made a will disinheriting their son "to punish him for his shameful alliance with Françoise-Marie-Apolline Biancolelli, protesting, for the rest, to declare null the marriage which he might have contracted with her did they come to discover it."

Coming into possession of proofs of the marriage, they had their son removed to Angers, and they enjoined upon him to declare that he had been abused and suborned. Of a weak character, he gave way and signed this declaration. Nevertheless he repaired immediately to a notary to protest against the step he had just taken.

The Parliament gave judgment on the 11th February 1695, declaring the marriage null, and forbidding the Sieur de Turgis and Mademoiselle Françoise Biancolelli "to cohabit, under pain of corporal punishment, or to enter into a fresh contract of marriage, under pain of its nullity." And this "whether during the lifetime or after the death of his father and mother." Against this Constantin de Turgis lodged a yearly protest with his notary—there are seven of them in existence.

Françoise Biancolelli had left the theatre in 1695. The

father of M. de Turgis died in the same year, but the fate of the young couple was not ameliorated until 1701. They were then remarried under a dispensation from the Cardinal of Noailles, and they declared that "there had been born of them under faith of marriage two children then living, namely: Charles-Dominique de Turgis des Chaises, born in 1692, and a daughter who later on became Madame Millin de Tressolles."

"From that time onwards, M. de Turgis went publicly to visit his wife, and even appeared with her in public places." Although he continued to make use of rooms at his mother's house, he lived with his wife in the Rue des Petits-Pères, received there, and spent there most of his time, whilst Françoise Biancolelli publicly bore his name.

The mother of M. de Turgis died on the 2nd February 1704, and renewed in her will the two acts of disinheritance should her son remarry Mademoiselle Biancolelli, as if she were in ignorance of the fact that they were already remarried, an ignorance hardly possible considering that they lived in the same parish.

M. de Turgis died on the 29th April 1706. Perceiving that his end was approaching, he sent for his nephew, de Turgis de Canteleu, then in his fourteenth year. He represented to him in a touching manner the sad position of his wife and children, caused him to embrace them and recommended them to him. Young Canteleu promised that he would never abandon his aunt and cousins. He kept his word for, dying at the age of twenty-one, he left to Charles-Dominique, his cousin, an income of eight thousand livres to sustain his name, and an income of four thousand to the sister.

After the death of her husband, who left nothing but debts,

seeing that he died disinherited, Françoise Biancolelli was reduced to seek assistance, having spent her own possessions to support her husband in military service. The courts pronounced a judgment in 1709, granting her a pension of a thousand livres for herself and her children, and in 1713 the king, desiring to recompense the services of Constantin de Turgis in the person of his widow, awarded her a further pension of three hundred livres.

Madame de Turgis left two children, Charles-Dominique de Turgis, chevalier of Saint-Louis and an officer in the royal navy, and Marie-Anne-Reine de Turgis, the wife of the Sieur Millin de Tressolles.

V

Giovanna Rosa Benozzi, celebrated under the name of SILVIA, went to Paris with the troupe summoned by the Regent in 1716. She played for forty-two years the parts of leading lady with the same vivacity, the same shrewdness, and always producing the same illusion. The inconstant public never cooled towards her. She enjoyed applause until the hour of her death, and was mourned with the liveliest regrets. She excelled especially in the plays of M. de Marivaux, of whose fine and witty dialogue she had a perfect grasp. A volume would hardly suffice to contain all the praise which she received in prose and verse.

The rôles of Silvia were very diverse. In the plays of Marivaux, like *Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard*, she is at once mistress and soubrette. In other pieces she is just a soubrette, sometimes a simple naïve peasant girl, or an innocent

shepherdess, as in *Arlequin Poli par l'Amour*, the first play which Marivaux produced at the Comédie-Italienne.

Harlequin enters, playing with a battledore and shuttlecock, and in this fashion advances to the feet of Silvia. There, still playing, he lets the shuttlecock fall, and in stooping to pick it up he perceives Silvia ; astonished, he remains arrested in his stooping attitude ; little by little he comes jerkily erect again ; then he looks at her. She, in an access of shyness, attempts to withdraw ; he arrests her with the words : " You are in a hurry then ? "

SILVIA. I withdraw because I do not know you.

HARLEQUIN. You do not know me ? So much the worse. Let us make acquaintance, shall we ?

SILVIA (*shyly*). Certainly.

HARLEQUIN (*approaching her, and signifying his joy in little bursts of laughter*). You are very pretty !

SILVIA. You are very amiable.

HARLEQUIN. Not at all, I speak the truth.

SILVIA (*laughing a little in her turn*). You are very pretty too.

HARLEQUIN. So much the better. Where do you live ? I shall come and see you.

Silvia tells him that she is beloved of a shepherd who might spy upon them, which afflicts Harlequin ; but she assures him that she does not love the shepherd, and Harlequin is consoled. He informs her in his turn that he lodges with the Fairy, which arouses jealousy in Silvia because, she says, the fairy is more beautiful than she. Harlequin reassures her. Soon Silvia has no uneasiness other than that occasioned her by her sheep; they are straying and she is obliged to follow them. Harlequin takes her hand and kisses it, saying : " Oh ! the pretty little

fingers! I never had sweetmeats as good as these!" And thus they separate.

In another scene Silvia returns with a cousin, another shepherdess, whose advice she asks. "Harlequin has already kissed my hand," she says, "and he will want to kiss it again. Advise me, you who have had so many lovers. Shall I allow him?"

"Beware of doing so," replies the cousin. "Be very severe, for that ferments the affection of a lover, and beware of telling him that you love him."

"But how can I help it?" asks Silvia.

Harlequin returns; tendernesses between the two lovers; jealousy of the fairy, who causes the disappearance of Silvia; then ruses of Harlequin, to whom love has given so much spirit that he purloins the magic wand of the fairy, leaving her impotent; he presents it to Silvia, who employs it to evoke spirits and devils, which are beaten by Harlequin.

In *L'Amante Romanesque* (1718) Silvia confesses to her waiting-woman, Spinette, that she is still in ignorance of what love may mean notwithstanding that she has been married; but, in the solitude in which her husband left her, she spent her time in reading romances which have turned her head. She detests all men, she says, and she is to take into her service a certain Marinette who speaks, perhaps, more ill of the male sex than she does herself. This Marinette is no other than Mario, who, in the disguise of a waiting-woman, seeks to gain the presence of Silvia whom he loves. Spinette opposes herself at first, but, after many promises from Mario, and after he has sworn that he has no design beyond that of seeing Silvia, Spinette presents him to her mistress and he is engaged as a

waiting-woman. Wishing, however, to be faithful to his word to Spinette, Marinette (Mario) excuses himself from entering the service of Silvia, saying that he has just come into an inheritance from an aunt, who has left him an income of twelve thousand livres. "That," he says, "is the wherewithal to seek a husband."

SILVIA. I am charmed by what you tell me, and you are not to doubt that it was my aim to care for your fortune by attaching you to myself.

MARINETTE (Mario). Madame, I am already more attached to you than you think.

SILVIA. But you speak already of seeking a husband, and you hated men so bitterly.

MARINETTE. Nevertheless one always ends that way. Still, I shall hold back as much as possible and perhaps all my life; I am very difficult to please.

SILVIA. What is your taste? Let us hear.

MARINETTE. I desire one who has the heart of an Italian and the manners of a Frenchman.

Silvia approves these ideas, nevertheless she continues to denounce all men. Spinette and Marinette in an even greater degree follow her example. In the end Marinette says so much ill of them that Silvia embraces him with fervour.

SILVIA. Come, my dear Marinette, let me embrace you. I love you with all my heart. I find in you my own thoughts, my sentiments, my humour. (*To* SPINETTE, *who attempts to check her.*) Stand aside, Spinette. I want to kiss her a thousand times.

SPINETTE. Madame, spare me the sight of it.

SILVIA. Why should you oppose it?

SPINETTE. I'm jealous.

SILVIA. Withdraw, silly. Approach, my heroine, let me stifle you with caresses. (*To* SPINETTE.) What does that mean?

Why do you tear her from my arms ? Release me, I tell you, and stand aside.

SPINETTE. But, madame, you have read romances ; do you not remember Céladon who disguised himself as a girl to approach his mistress Astræ ?

SILVIA. What then ?

SPINETTE. If perchance Marinette were a boy who had had the same idea, should I be right to allow you to continue as you are doing ?

SILVIA. Ha, ha ! You are still making fun of my romances. If Marinette, with the spirit and the sentiments which are hers, were a boy, that boy to-morrow would be my husband.

Mario goes down upon his knees and declares himself. Silvia forgives, and accepts him for her cavalier pending that he shall become her husband.

In *The Portrait* (1727), a play by M. Beauchamp, Silvia has assumed the garments of her soubrette Columbine, and passes herself off as Columbine. She gives a very bad reception to Valerius, the future husband destined her by her father. Valerius is not duped ; but he pretends to mistake her for her waiting-woman, and thus discloses to her his sentiments in a more delicate manner. But the more Valerius displays his submission to the orders of the beautiful Silvia, the more does she, believing him to be indifferent, attempt to turn him aside. With this aim in view, she herself sketches her portrait for him :

" First of all she is neither tall nor short, neither well made nor ill made. She is fat rather than thin, and notwithstanding all that, a rare thing to-day, she has a figure, and she has a little air of recklessness and youth that is arresting. It is perhaps neither wit nor brilliance, yet it partakes of both. She is white and rosy ; she has eyes and teeth ; she dances passably ; in

a word she is like a thousand others. On the subject of her conduct there is nothing to tell you. She lives as all girls live to-day. As for her temper, faith, it is not easy to define it. She is gentle by reflection, sharp by temperament, timid in the things which she knows, decided in those of which she is ignorant, imperious with those who owe her nothing, exigent without friendship, jealous without passion, absent-minded to the point of forgetfulness, and unequal to the point of brusqueness; in short it is so difficult to live with her that I cannot bear to be with her most of the time. Do you know who is the master, the guide, the director of all her actions and of all her sayings? It is Caprice."

Valerius pretends to attach faith to this portrait, which he knows does not at all resemble her since he has the original under his eyes; to pique her he says that he will renounce Silvia, an announcement which angers her.

Silvia was the subject of many madrigals, sonnets and epistles composed in her honour. She was born in Toulouse, of Italian parents. She was married in Paris, in 1720, to Giuseppe Baletti, known by the name of *Mario*. Of this marriage was born Antoine-Louis Baletti (*Lelio*), who entered the Théâtre-Italien in 1742, Louis Baletti, who became a dancer, and Jeanne Baletti, who married Blondel, the royal architect. Silvia died in 1759.

vi

At the time that the famous Silvia was undertaking rôles which demanded such versatility, Flaminia, the wife of Louis Riccoboni (Lelio), was playing the parts of leading lady.

Elena-Virginia Baletti was born at Ferrara in 1686. She visited in her childhood the various theatres of Italy. Her parents, although poor, gave her an education calculated to place her above the majority of her class. From her most tender youth she passed for one of the best actresses of her country.

Louis Riccoboni, already at the age of twenty-two the director of a company, perceived in the talents of Mademoiselle Baletti a means of reintroducing to the Italian stage the qualities that it had lost. He sought and obtained her in marriage. She went to Paris with her husband in 1716 to contribute with him to the academic reformation of the theatre, after having vainly attempted it in Italy, where the masks had remained masters of the field; but the French public also loved Harlequin and Scaramouche, and the performances of Italian masterpieces could never have sufficed for the success of this new company. It was necessary to give way to the demand for the masks. Flaminia retired with Riccoboni in 1732. Justice was done to her talents, and she was esteemed not only as an excellent actress but also as a very learned woman. She spoke Spanish and French quite as well as her mother tongue, and made considerable progress in a serious study of Latin.

Flaminia drew from the *Rudens* of Plautus the subject for her comedy *Naufrage*, which was not a success. Her play *Abdilly, Roi de Grenade*, a tragi-comedy written in collaboration with Delisle, was also not a success. Out of conceit with the theatre she left it entirely in 1733 and dwelt in retirement until 1771, the epoch of her death.

Marie Laboras de Mézières, born in Paris in 1713, made her

first appearance on the 23rd August 1734, in the rôle of Lucile, in *La Surprise de l'Amour*. She married François Riccoboni the son, and withdrew from the Théâtre-Italien in 1761. She wrote various French scenes to be introduced into the Italian scenarii, but it is as a French novelist that Madame Riccoboni earned the durable celebrity of her name: *Lettres de Fanny Butler*, *Ernestine*, *Histoire du Marquis de Catesby*, were her principal works. She also translated several English pieces: *La Façon de se Fixer*, *La Femme Jalouse*, *La Fausse Délicatesse* and *Il Est Possédé*. She was one of the greatest wits of her day. She died in 1792.

On the 3rd May 1730, Anna-Elisabeth Constantini, the daughter of Giovanni-Battista Constantini (the *Ottavio* of the old company), made her début at the Comédie-Italienne to play such characters as Isabelle and Silvia.

vii

Giaccometta-Antonia Veronese, known under the name of Camille, was born in Venice in 1735. She went to France in 1744 with her father Veronese (Pantaloon) and her sister Anna Veronese (Coraline), being then no more than nine years of age. Camille made her début as a dancer on the 21st May 1744, at the same time that her sister and father were making their first appearance in *Coraline*, *Esprit Follet*, a piece which enjoyed a great vogue. Subsequently she was seen in the rôles of leading lady, in 1747, at the age of twelve, in a scenario (*Les Sœurs Rivales*) written expressly for her by her father.

"Camille," says an author of that time, "had a gesture of an expressiveness such as is not to be learned before a mirror,

and an accent of a naturalness such as art can never yield, but such as the heart may prompt when it is moved. Free from ambition and jealousy, she was innocent of those rivalries which nearly always spring up among women of her condition. Her character was in her face, and one saw imprinted there nobility, frankness, wit and gaiety ; no woman of her state ever carried disinterestedness further, nor did ingratitude succeed in turning her aside from beneficence. With a beneficent soul it is almost impossible not to have a tender heart ; these qualities are nearly always inseparable, and if her sensibility permitted her some weaknesses she knew how to earn pardon for them by the constancy of her attachment."

"The Sieur Billioni has just produced at the Théâtre-Italien the ballet *Pygmalion* with success. The subject is so well known that it is unnecessary for me to enter into details of it. I will remark only that the Demoiselle Camille, who plays the part of the statue, renders it with the most singular truth. Nothing can equal the delicacy of her pantomime, particularly in the scene when the statue gradually becomes animate ; she depicts her surprise, her curiosity, her nascent love, and all the sudden or graduated movements of her soul, with an expression such as has never yet been equalled. I think that the art of the ancient Greek and Roman mimes could not surpass the talents of Camille in this style of work " (Letter of FAVART to M. de Durazzo, 27th December 1760).

" ' *Thémire Délivrée*, such is the title of the ballet-pantomime performed by Billon,' says Biglioni, the erstwhile ballet-master of the Opéra-Comique. Thémire (Mademoiselle Camille), amidst a troop of hunters, delivers her orders, departs with them to

beat the countryside, and leaves the stage empty (a gross fault). Two woodcutters and the wife of one of them dance a *pas de trois*. They go off as they came on without explaining the reason of their appearance. Thémire reappears ; she has been involuntarily separated from the hunt. She finds herself alone and expresses her fears. A savage perceives her from the height of a hill, comes abruptly down and seizes her ; she swoons in terror ; the savage binds her with slender branches of willow and drags her into his cave. At this critical moment the hunters arrive and perceive the danger of Thémire ; they charge up the hill ; savages armed with clubs hurl themselves upon them. Ah ! what is happening during this time to poor Thémire ? Finally, luckily or unluckily, the savages are routed and Thémire is delivered. Were they in time or were they not in time ? That is what remains to be explained. Be it as it may Thémire is brought on in triumph to the sound of cymbals. (Why cymbals ?) There are rejoicings on the deliverance of Thémire. The conquered savages also rejoice. (Wherefore ?)

" Notwithstanding these absurdities the ballet gives great pleasure. That is because it is perfectly executed. It is because Camille, who represents Thémire, is an excellent comedienne " (Favart, 1st August 1760).

Camille died in 1768 at the age of thirty-three.

Among other actresses of fame who played in Italy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries let us cite those who played under the names of Clarice, Angela, Graziosa, Rosaura, Eleonora, Diana, Beatrice or Isabella, the Signore Alborghezzi, 1600 ; Armelini, 1600 ; Andreoletti, 1602 ; Garziani, 1610 ;

Aspontini, 1630; Pazzighetti, 1661; Teresa-Corona Sabolini, who played in 1688 under the name of Ottavia Diana; Giovanna Amatis, 1695; Anziani, 1715; Malatesta, 1720; Albertini, 1706; Antonia Albani, 1760; Teodora Ricci of Padua, who exercised so great an influence on the talent of Carlo Gozzi, 1760; Felicita and Rosalie Bonami, 1775; Marianna Bassi, 1750; etc.

XIII

SCAPINO

ENDOWED with honeyed language, engaging manners and a sycophantic politeness, BRIGHELLA is the most infamous rascal that ever drew breath. He does not even display the brutal frankness of Polichinelle to counterbalance the baseness of his sentiments. He is a smirking cat concealing vicious claws in pads of velvet. Lively and insolent with women, braggart and boastful with old men and cowards, he decamps on the approach of any of those who do not fear him. There is a great deal to be dreaded from him; the more you have frightened him the less disposed is he to forgive you, and if you should receive a stab in the dark, be sure that his was the hand that dealt it. A singer, a dancer and a musician, when he desires to do anyone an evil turn there is no house into which he is not able to insinuate himself. He is a valuable servant to the man who knows how to employ his talents. As his needs are many, he requires a deal of money, and if you know how to flatter his self-love and to pay him well, there is neither girl nor woman in Italy whom he is not able to wheedle for you. He has discharged all kinds of offices; he has been a soldier, an attorney's clerk, and he has even turned hangman's assistant so as to abstract himself from the attentions of justice. The service he prefers to all others is that of lovers, and it is rather from inclination than from necessity that he loves what he calls *his estate.*

For if there is no one to serve he will work for his own account to keep himself in practice, and then woe betide the young girls who fall under his claws! They are for ever lost if they lend an ear to his proposals and his sophisms. Brighella believes absolutely in nothing but the rope which is one day to hang him; hence a glimpse of a watchman will reduce him to a condition which it is impossible to describe.

Such was the old Brighella; but in the course of centuries and of civilisation he has improved a little. He is still imbued with the same instincts, but he does not assassinate quite so freely. To-day many women are able to look him in the face without trembling and to listen to him without believing. He is far more terrible to the purses of old men, which he purloins with incredible dexterity. His dreams are of nothing but thefts like the Epidicus of Plautus, from whom he descends in direct line.

"As for me," says Epidicus, "I am going to assemble the Senate of my mind to deliberate upon what I shall do. For it is upon money (however much it may be our best friend) that I am going to declare war. What source shall I tap? I must neither fall asleep nor draw back. I am resolved to make a fresh attempt upon my old master. I have procured a sharp knife to disembowel the old man's purse. But what do I see? Two old men at once! What a capture! I shall transform myself into a leech and suck their blood. . . ."

Later, when he is content with his misdeeds:

"I do not believe that in all Attica there is a soil more fruitful than my old master. I take all the money I want from his cupboard, however locked and sealed he may leave it.

But should the old man come to perceive it, 'ware the rod!"

Brighella, whose name signifies intriguer, is as old as Harlequin, his compatriot. We have already said that both were natives of Bergamo. The Slaveró of *La Piovana* of Angelo Beolco is a true Brighella.

"As for me," he says, "I find nothing difficult; I am accustomed to despise things. I want two young girls, and if it be not sufficient to kill one man I shall kill two. Do you not remember that dispute in which I stabbed a man as easily as you prick a bladder, and of that other fellow whose bones I broke as you squelch a bean?"

Elsewhere we hear him declaring: "I am now going to seek Sittono, into whose hands the girl must have fallen by now. I shall so contrive with amiable words that he shall give me the fifty livres promised me so that I may get me hence. And should anyone suggest that I have acted badly, I shall throw the entire fault of it upon my gossip."

Slaveró recks nothing of being a perjurer like Brighella. A purse has been stolen, and Bertevello, the fisherman, knows who has it.

BERTEVELLO. Good-morrow, comrade. What is your name?

SLAVERÓ. My name is Slaveró.

BERTEVELLO. Slaveró. Very good. I am resolved to conceal nothing from you because I have no desire to go to prison. Since you say that the purse is yours, swear to me that if I tell you who has it you will give me what you promised.

SLAVERÓ. On the faith of an honest man.

BERTEVELLO. Swear it on your soul.

SLAVERÓ. Since I give you my assurance, why should you require an oath?

BERTEVELLO. Swear as I shall bid you.

SLAVERÓ. Very well.

BERTEVELLO. Say: I, Slaveró, I swear——

SLAVERÓ. I, Slaveró, I swear——

BERTEVELLO. —that I will give you what I have promised you——

SLAVERÓ. —that I will give you what I have promised you——

BERTEVELLO. —of whatever is in the purse——

SLAVERÓ. —of whatever is in the purse——

BERTEVELLO. —in livres, sous and deniers——

SLAVERÓ. —in livres, sous and deniers——

BERTEVELLO. —upon burning coals—

SLAVERÓ. —upon burning coals——

BERTEVELLO. —burning and scorching me at once——

SLAVERÓ. —burning and scorching me at once——

BERTEVELLO. —that by a miracle may the living and the dead——

SLAVERÓ. —that by a miracle may the living and the dead——

BERTEVELLO. —leap at my eyes, tear them out, and burn them, and wither my hands.

SLAVERÓ. —leap at my eyes, tear them out and burn them, and wither my hands.

BERTEVELLO. And that the devil himself may bear me off——

SLAVERÓ. And that the devil himself may bear me off——

BERTEVELLO. —into the depths of misfortune——

SLAVERÓ. —into the depths of misfortune——

BERTEVELLO. —so that not a fragment of my person shall survive.

SLAVERÓ. —so that not a fragment of my person shall survive.

BERTEVELLO. Very good. Await me here and I will bring the man with the purse to you.

SLAVERÓ. I shall wait. Ah, purse! You see how strongly I desire you. Have no fear, we shall depart together. Other-

wise I should not have sworn as I have done. And I do not consider myself under any obligation of giving what I promised to this fellow for having sworn what I swore. Moreover I swore with my tongue and not with my conscience. Is not my tongue free? Can I dispose of it? My tongue can say what it pleases.

In a more modern Italian scenario which has done duty in various forms, always with success, "some young Venetian gentlemen are in a villa on the banks of the Brenta. To amuse themselves and to dispel the sadness which might result from the death of their butler, Meneghino, they take it into their heads to make fun of three poltroons who are in their service: Pantaloon, Harlequin and Brighella. They make the pretence to believe in the boastful valour of Pantaloon, and they beg of him to spend the night watching over the body of the dead butler. Pantaloon consents against his will; but it is Harlequin who has been put to bed on the bier instead of Meneghino. They have covered him with a sheet and painted his face white. Harlequin is no more at ease than he who watches over him. He fears lest this farce should bring some misfortune; nevertheless he makes merry at the expense of his comrade, performs a somersault on his bed, and heaves great sighs. Soon, however, his laughter ceases, and he thinks only of following the example of Pantaloon, who has gone into hiding, for Brighella appears, dressed as a devil, and pursues them with a torch. Brighella, however, imagined that he would have to do only with Pantaloon, and did not expect to find Harlequin in the place of the dead man, still less to find a corpse running in this scared fashion about the chamber. In his fright he falls down, and we behold the three of them rolling on the ground

possessed by terror ineffable. Finally the entrance of their masters, who come to mock them, brings about their return to reason, at the end of a long series of jests which the public receives ever with uproarious laughter."

The costume of Brighella in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries consisted of a sort of jacket and a wide pantaloon in white linen to suggest his rustic origin, a cap laced in green, and a cloak; the coat and pantaloons were laced at the seams with green cloth so as to make the costume represent a sort of livery. His olive-tinted and bearded mask conforms, like that of Harlequin, with the tradition of the ancient *Sanniones*.

In the nineteenth century his costume became a bizarre combination of old and new fashions. His jacket took the form of a riding-coat made of wool or white flannel with three collars; further he wore a waistcoat and pantaloons of the same material laced with green. He preserved his traditional white cap trimmed with green and his brown half-mask, whose beard was arranged so as to imitate heavy whiskers and a slight moustache. The chin was shaven. In this costume he looks very much like a negro arrayed in a ridiculous livery.

Brighella is the stock from which are sprung Beltrame, Scapino, Mezzetin, Flautino, Gradelino, Truccagnino, Fenocchio, Bagolino, and all the shrewd and intriguing lackeys of the Comédie-Française, from *Sbrigani* (a variant of the name of Brighella), *Sganarelle*, *Mascarille* and *La Montagne* to *Frontin* and *Labranche*; the livery only has changed; the character is always that of Brighella, and from Pseudolus, the Greek slave, down to Figaro, the factotum, the type has always been a liar, a drunkard, a thief, a debauchee and more or less a murderer.

An Italian comedian, known under the name of Briguelle, appeared in 1671 on the stage of the Comédie-Italienne to replace Locatelli (*Trivelin*), lately dead, in the parts of first *Zani*. According to Robinet, this character became the rage, and, after his portrayer's death, Louis XIV., seeking to replace him, requested another actor from the Duke of Modena. The duke sent him Giuseppe Cimadori, who played under the name of Fenocchio the same rôles as those of Brighella. This actor, however, died on the journey.

The two most famous players of Brighella during the eighteenth century in the Italian troupes were Giuseppe Angeleri, who from 1704 to 1752 undertook the improvised parts in the comedies of Goldoni, and Atanasio Zanoni of Ferrara, who was one of the best comedians of the eighteenth century. "Zanoni received a very good education, but his taste for declamation having urged him to embrace a theatrical career, he joined the troupe of the famous Antonio Sacchi, whose sister he married. Zanoni was unrivalled in the grace of his enunciation and the vivacity and wit of his repartees. To the qualities natural to his state he added those of a lofty character. On the 22nd February 1792, on his way home from a splendid supper, he fell into a deep canal and died soon afterwards." In 1787 a collection was published in Venice of the mordant, allegorical and satirical Brigelleschi witticisms. We will cite some fragments.

"One should not say 'a thief,' but 'an ingenious mathematician who finds a thing before its owner has lost it. Appropriated objects are the things which we inherit before the death of those who possess them. To conduct a theft with propriety it is necessary to be assisted by three devils: one

who will teach you how to purloin adroitly, one who will show you how to conceal effectively, and a third who will persuade you never to make restitution. When I am compelled to *travel* —that is to say, to decamp—I console widowed hens by adopting their chickens. I deliver purses and watches from captivity. I am very talkative because my father was dumb and he left behind him a capital of new words which had never been used. For the rest, I am a bastard. Out of charity I was once given a bowl of soup, but so extremely limpid that the beautiful Narcissus might have seen himself mirrored in it more clearly than in his fountain. My shirt is become a romance ; it is full of knights-errant and the washerwoman refuses to wash it for fear of poisoning the river. My supper is the supper of Bertoldo : a plate of peas *ventosissimi*, with some boiled hope, a ragout of desires and a piece of roast expectation. My debts have transformed me into a star that is seen only at night."

ii

Fenocchio, a variant of the type of Brighella, made his appearance on the Italian stage as early as 1560. Like Brighella, he finds employment in amorous intrigues, and he acts in these not only on behalf of Celio, Leandro or Zerbino, but also on his own. We behold him in a Venetian play of the seventeenth century, written in dialogue upon an old scenario, as the lover of Olivette, the servant of Pantaloon's daughter Beatrice. Harlequin, another lackey in the piece, is so naïve as to take him into his confidence, never suspecting that Fenocchio is his rival. From that moment Fenocchio swears

to be avenged upon Harlequin, and seeks for means to be rid of him. He begins by playing nasty tricks upon him. Harlequin is bearing Olivette two birds alive in a basket; Fenocchio takes possession of it, and replaces the birds by a cat. He is present at the compliments by which Harlequin accompanies his gift and those returned him by Olivette, who adores birds, and he is the sniggering witness of her disappointment when she beholds a furious tabby escaping from the basket, after having scratched her. The anger of Olivette and the tears of Harlequin rejoice the heart of Fenocchio. Harlequin, wondering who can have done him such an evil turn, suspects his confidant. But Fenocchio swears by all that there is most sacred (in which he does not compromise himself, seeing that he believes in nothing) that he is incapable of a farce which could result in spilling the blood of the beautiful Olivette.

By force of circumstances Harlequin is unable to continue to see Olivette, whom Pantaloon keeps in duress with his daughter. He has recourse to the expedients of Fenocchio. The latter takes advantage of the situation to rid himself of his preferred rival.

"Pretend to be dead," he advises him. "I shall put you in a coffin and take you to Pantaloon the apothecary upon the pretext of getting him to make your autopsy. During the night, when everyone is asleep, you can go and seek Olivette."

Credulous Harlequin consents. Fenocchio carries him to Pantaloon's house, and, after having related to the latter an unlikely story, which Pantaloon readily believes, he withdraws, hoping that the apothecary will deprive Harlequin perhaps of a leg or an arm. But Harlequin, being alone with Pantaloon, who is admiring the beautiful body which has been brought

him for dissection, cannot resist the need to scratch himself. This occasions some surprise to the apothecary, who has never seen the like. Trembling, he seizes a scalpel, and is about to make a large incision in Harlequin, when the latter leaps up in his alarm, and, shouting for help, throws himself upon Pantaloon, who swoons in terror.

Harlequin goes to Fenocchio to discover a fresh expedient. Fenocchio reproaches him with his lack of patience. "You should have let the apothecary bleed you a little," he says, "and thus you would have seen Olivette. However I have found a better way: you shall disguise yourself as a pig, and I shall take you to Pantaloon as a present from the doctor."

Harlequin again consents. Fenocchio disguises him, and leads his pig to Pantaloon, who admires this beautiful animal. "It is a pity to kill it," he says. Again Harlequin is taken with the need to scratch himself, and he does this in a fashion so singular in a pig that Pantaloon is surprised.

Fenocchio explains that this is a trained pig, and he makes Harlequin go through several performances, such as that of walking upright, of taking snuff from the apothecary's box, and replying by signs to questions that are addressed him.

Pantaloon exclaims: "What an admirable pig! What a rare animal! I shall not have him killed until to-morrow morning," and he causes Harlequin to be shut up in a sty, whilst Fenocchio slips into the house in quest of Olivette, certain that this time he is rid of his rival, and confident that he will see him disembowelled on the morrow.

During the night Harlequin finds a way out of the place where he has been imprisoned. Always in his bizarre disguise, he wanders forth in quest of Olivette's chamber. But he gets

into the apothecary's shop, where Pantaloon sleeps on his camp bed. Whilst groping his way about, Harlequin knocks over some vessels, which are broken in their fall.

PANTALOON (*waking with a start*). Nane! Nane! Drive out the cats that have got into my shop!

HARLEQUIN (*aside*). He takes me for a cat, I am lost if he recognises me. Oh, poor Harlequin! who could have foretold you that to see Olivette it would be necessary for you to play the pig? The worst of it is that I do not know where I am going.

He hurtles against a pile of bottles and breaks the lot. Pantaloon laments: "There goes my oil of frogs! My balsam of oysters is all lost! My electuary of sepia is broken, I am sure!" He gets up, lights his candle and looks about him; meanwhile Harlequin has slipped under the bed. Pantaloon, after having deplored the loss of his drugs, which he admits, however, will not be difficult to replace, seeing that in reality they consist of no more than earth and water, returns to bed and puts out the light. Harlequin attempts to rise, and in doing so lifts up the bed. Pantaloon rolls along the ground with him, gets up and strikes out haphazard, shouting: "The pig! The pig is strangling me! Help!"

When Fenocchio finds that he has not succeeded in disembarrassing himself of Harlequin by this means, he suggests to him a third expedient; this is to procure a deal of money with which to bribe Pantaloon, who will then allow him to see Olivette. He announces that he knows a way to get the money. "The Doctor is a collector of curiosities. We will go and sell him one."

He dresses up Harlequin as a clock, with a dial in the middle

of his belly, and carries him off to the Doctor, who admires this beautiful and very curious piece of horology.

"This," says Fenocchio to the Doctor, "represents, as you see, a man, and it tells the minutes, the hours, the days, the months, the years and the centuries; also it can predict the past, and it can say Papa and Mamma, and it chimes."

So saying, Fenocchio takes up a hammer and shows the Doctor that all that is necessary to make it chime is to strike the head of the figure. But Harlequin ducks his head and threatens to discover everything if he is touched. Fortunately the Doctor has not perceived this movement. Fenocchio, who loves money better than vengeance, begins to haggle with the Doctor. But at this point a servant enters with the Doctor's soup. Harlequin is unable to resist the temptation, and throws himself upon the soup, which he swallows greedily. The Doctor turns round, and cries: "Ho! ho! ho! A clock that eats! Help! murder! thieves!"

iii

Louis Riccoboni says, in speaking of the costume of Beltrame:

"His dress is not extraordinary, and I think that it is proper to his day, or perhaps a little earlier. He wears a mask which is the same as that of Scapin. . . . Beltrame, who was a Milanese, and who spoke the language of his country, wore also the costume of it."

His dress is that of a servant of the end of the sixteenth century.

SCAPINO

This type, more modern than Brighella, had no other employments in the *Gelosi* troupe than that of an astute and cunning gossip; but, like Mezzetin, and the French Sganarelle later on, he played all the husband parts, pretending at times to believe the stories that were told him. In the middle of the nineteenth century, at Bologna, this personage, which by then had passed into the marionettes, still represented the burgher, the merchant or the old Jew, and shared the parentage of Columbine with old Tabarino.

Niccolo Barbieri was the first actor to render the French acquainted with this shade of Brighella. Under the name of *Beltrame da Milano*, he went with Flaminio Scala and Isabella Andreini to play in Paris before Henri IV., in 1600. After the *Gelosi* troupe was dispersed, Beltrame returned to Italy, and joined the *Fedeli* company. In 1613 he was back again in Paris with this company under the management of G. B. Andreini. He remained until 1618, returned yet again in 1623 and continued in the French capital until 1625, when he himself became the head of the troupe, and rendered himself famous in Italy and in France, not only as an actor but also as a writer.

His work: "*La Supplica*: a tract for all men of merit who have not set up as critics and who are not entirely foolish," is no more than a piece of pleading in favour of the comedians and the comedy of his day; it is, however, extremely interesting for the anecdotes included in it, which give an idea of the manners of the time.

"All the authors who have written against comedy" (he says) "have not always been equipped with knowledge of this

art. The science of all things is to be found among all men, but no single man has the gift of knowing everything. Sacred and profane authors cannot judge us. Saint Bonaventura draws such a picture of comedians, that if you were to believe him you must consider us all damned. Let me relate a little anecdote which proceeds directly out of what I am saying.

"When I left Vercelli, my birthplace, in the year 1596, I joined a mountebank known by the surname of Monteferrin. We visited Aosta (anciently Augusta), a city of Savoy, and Monteferrin begged the chief magistrate's permission to set up his trestles there. But, as this perhaps was not the custom in that city, the magistrate, not knowing what to decide, went to seek counsel of his spiritual superior, who plainly refused this permission, saying that he did not desire the admission of magicians into that country. The stupefied Monteferrin replied that, being unable so much as to read, it was impossible for him to work magic. The superior bade him be silent: 'I know all about that,' he said. 'I have seen in Italy charlatans who took a ball in one hand and caused it to pass into the other, or who threw a leaden bullet into one eye, and caused it to come out of the other; who swallowed burning tow, ejecting the fire from their mouths in a thousand sparks; who pierced their arms with a knife and were instantly cured of the wound; and all that by magic and other works of the devil.' Thereupon the superior dismissed Monteferrin without waiting for his reply, and threatening him with imprisonment.

"This superior was a theologian, but he knew nothing of human adroitness, and in that he greatly resembled those blessed saints who have spoken so ardently against the art of comedy, having never witnessed more than some stray farce

or some obscene nonsense performed by the marionettes of mountebanks and charlatans.

" Many ignorant folk, who do not know the etymology of the word *istrio*, nor its derivation, believe that by *istrioni* (histrions) *stregoni* (warlocks) is meant, magicians and men abandoned to the devil; and it is as a result of this that in some parts of Italy the ignorant people hold the belief that comedians can command rain or summon a tempest at their will. As a matter of fact they are very poor enchanters and magicians, and very hungry ones, who have a deal of trouble to command a little money to rain upon them so that they may live; besides, if they had the power to summon rain they would be careful not to exercise it, for when it rains no one comes to their performances."

To prove that comedy is not a vile and contemptible art, Beltrame cites a large number of comedians who were honoured and held in high esteem, mentioning among actors of antiquity Roscius, the friend of Cicero, Aliturus and Æsop, and among actors of his own day Isabella Andreini, Pietro-Maria Cecchini (*Fritellino*), Giovanni-Battista Andreini (*Lelio*), Cintio Fidenzi, Maria Malloni (*Celia*), Nicolò Zeccha (*Bertolino*), and himself. " Myself," he says, " the least of all these, I was appointed by King Louis the Just—a very good and very Christian monarch —a soldier in his guard of honour, and I was jealous to show myself worthy of that honour, as my captain, the illustrious Duc de la Valette, will bear witness. The eminent Cardinal Ubaldini can also tell how much His Very Christian Majesty was disposed to overwhelm me with favours. I will not mention the princes, princesses, kings, queens and emperors who have

held the children of comedians at the baptismal font and have called their parents gossip, both in speaking and in writing to them, nor how, upon occasion, they have made them participate in their fêtes, drive with them in their court carriages, gratified them with presents from their own hands, regaled them with sumptuous banquets, and invited them to participate in their amusements. Many princes and great lords have played in comedies before their relatives and friends, and have been eager to interpret in the best possible manner the characters entrusted to them, and this entirely for their amusement. Are they on that account to be deemed infamous and contemptible? No. Therefore, it follows that comedy is not vile.

"How many princes, kings and emperors have played in public in their own theatres? In my own day I have seen the Dukes of Mantua, Francesco, Fernando and Vincenzo performing with our comedians, as well as the Prince of Urbino and so many others whom I do not mention. If the great lord may tread the stage for his amusement without derogating from his nobility, why should honest folk be lost in reputation if they do the same for their livelihood? Since the nobles are not ashamed of performing in comedy, the art cannot be contemptible.

"I compare the efforts made to condemn comedy and comedians to those butterfly hunts engaged in by children, who run furiously through fields, heedlessly crushing plants and flowers under their feet, coming and going and striking the air with their arms, holding the very wind in their hands, and perspiring even unto blood. In their despair we see them sometimes throwing stones or their hats into the air, and then precipitating themselves upon their prey, without recking how

they tear their garments or perhaps even break a limb. And all this to what purpose? To seize a thing which, living, is of little use and dead of none. In short, the efforts of our denouncers resemble the prowesses of Don Quixote of La Mancha.

"Comedians study printed *libretti* with the permission of their superiors; it is true that they themselves invent a deal, but this without departing from the subject. The authors of subjects or scenarii seek the most likely stories and arrange them according to the rules of humour, just as the dramatic authors arrange their subjects according to the rules of poetry. Thereafter the actors undergo the necessary degree of study so as to interpret as aptly as possible the characters which they are to represent. Lovers and women study history, fable, rhymes and prose so that they may exploit the wealth of the language. Those whose aim it is to excite laughter ransack their brains to discover new jests, not out of any desire to sin or to lead others into sin, not to extol vice or error with obscene words, but that they may provoke laughter by the employment of equivocal and bizarre inventions in the exploitation of the characters entrusted to them. The Captain excites hilarity by his hyperbolic extravagances; Doctor Graziano does the same by his garbled quotations; the first lackey by his intrigues, his astuteness and his lively rejoinders; the second lackey by his stupidity; Harlequin by his tumblings; the Covielli by their grimaces and their macaronic language; the old men by their ponderous manners and their old-fashioned idioms.

"I have read that in the time of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius a certain Fulvius, pronounced lost by the doctors in consequence of an abscess in the breast, determined in his despair

to go and get himself killed in war. In battle he received a lance-thrust exactly in the middle of his abscess, and this wound cured him immediately of his alleged incurable ill. The very contrary happened to the consul Cneus Ruffinus, an old warrior, who died in consequence of a comb's tooth penetrating his head whilst he was combing himself. Are we to argue from these events that he who wishes to be well should go to war, and that none should ever comb himself under pain of death? I have seen sick men despaired of by their doctors, drink wine and recover health. Shall we therefore give wine to all sick men that they may be cured? A cripple who could never walk without crutches, slipped and fell; a passing vehicle ran over his legs at that moment and broke them both, as a consequence he was so thoroughly cured that thereafter he could walk without crutches. Is it therefore necessary that he who is crippled or lame should go and throw himself under vehicles so as to recover? It is very possible that some undesirable events may have taken place in the theatre. But is that a reason why one should not visit them? Two or three trees do not make a forest, and a man may die as becomingly in the theatre as elsewhere.

"In Italy the customs of one town are very different from those of another. In Naples a woman will call a man familiarly 'my treasure' or 'my handsome fellow' and other similar names, whilst in Lombardy such terms are not uttered save between lovers, or else are employed only by courtesans. To kiss a married woman in Naples is an insult to be washed out in blood, whilst in Piedmont it is considered a very trivial matter, and is deemed between acquaintances a proof of friendship or a mark of reverence. In some countries it is customary

for women to salute strangers in this fashion ; in others it were an impoliteness. In certain parts of the Marches the women seem almost hostile to the male sex, and they envelop themselves in their garments almost to the point of concealing their countenances. In Venice young girls are dressed entirely in white and widows entirely in black, and in such a fashion as not to allow one to see their faces, which are beautiful, for there the handsomest women are to be found. In other countries it is fashionable for ladies to display the throat and part of the breast, whilst in others again they are covered to the neck ; and yet all alike are honourable women. A fisherman will go half naked through the streets, as will also a wool-worker. What in some would be licentious is rendered by custom perfectly becoming in others. To see the naked feet and a little of the leg of a beautiful lady seems to be a great affair, whilst washerwomen and poor peasant girls display naked feet and legs without exciting the least comment. Nevertheless a woman's honour is everywhere the same. Why should the one give scandal and not the other ? Custom is answerable. Thus is it with women who play in comedy ; we know that the love speeches which they utter are no more than fictions, which cannot be held to corrupt the soul, since in uttering them an actress but conforms with the custom of her art."

iv

" Here come the coaches of Ferrara and Bologna ! This way, sirs ! This way, illustrious gentlemen ! Where are the baggages ? I will take charge of everything. Will your Excellencies lodge at the *Three Moors*, at the *Golden Shield*, at the

Royal Hostelry, at the *Pelican*, or elsewhere? I will conduct you where you will. I am a faithful and dependable man. Shall I carry your saddle bags? Mind that pool of water! This way, my lords! Ficchueto! Fenocchio! Come and fetch the trunks, portmantles, baggages, cloaks, swords and all the effects (*tutta la roba*) of these gentlemen! Do you require a pleasant agreeable valet who understands all things, or perhaps a *cicerone*? Here I am, my masters! My services are at your disposal. I ask nothing but the honour of being your servant, and you shall pay me what you please. Will your Excellencies dine forthwith? Or perhaps you would prefer to whet the appetite before supper? Here, sir host! Put all your dishes in the oven, I am bringing you travellers of quality!" (*And in a whisper:*) "I am to have half your profits or I shall proclaim your inn the hovel of a poisoner."

Thus SCAPINO.

Sometimes travellers will have none of him, telling him that they are not making a stay, and giving him perhaps a few coppers to be rid of him and his speeches. In such case he will set down the baggages and cloaks in the middle of a brook, and walk off shrugging his shoulders in contempt and pity.

"What misers! (*Che cacastechi!*) What needy fellows! (*Che bisognosi!*)"

Nevertheless Scapino is less of a rascal than his father Brighella. Where Brighella would freely ply his dagger, Scapino will but ply hands and feet, and more often still no more than his legs, for he is a thorough coward, and he will not give the lie to the etymology of his name Scappino, which is derived from *scappare*, to escape.

SCAPINO

Always a valet, he frequently changes his master; he is an intriguer, a wit, a garrulous fellow and a fluent liar. He bears a very evil reputation. He is a humbug (*un imbroglione*), a beggar and more or less of a thief, but greatly in favour with soubrettes. These young ladies find it impossible to amuse themselves without him. Scapin is a character that has been treated in a masterly manner by the hand of Molière. His name is the French equivalent of Brighella. They are one and the same personage, wearing the same costume and endowed with the same natures. In France Brighella lost his original name and modified his costume in the early part of the seventeenth century. Fundamentally, however, he remained unchanged in all but the label.

Caillot, in his *Petits Danseurs*, represents the Italian Scapino of his day, dressed like Fritellino, in ample garments with mask and beard, plumed hat, cloak and wooden sword. It was in such raiment that Dionis of Milan, the director of a troupe, played the parts of lackey in 1630.

But, upon being introduced to the French stage by Molière and Regnard, Scapin's costume became mixed with that of Beltrame, Turlupin and Jodelet. He discarded the mask, assumed garments striped green and white, his traditional colours, and became Gros-René, with powdered face, Mascarille, La Violette, Sganarelle, etc.

Molière, upon being reproached with the follies of Scapin, replied: "I saw the public quit *Le Misanthrope* for Scaramouche; I entrusted Scapin with the task of bringing them back again."

The Italian Scapino, who appeared on the Italian stage in Paris in 1716, resumed the costume of Brighella, slightly

modernised, and he perpetuated the rôles created by the ancient Briguelle and by Mezzetin.

Giovanni Bissoni played these parts in the troupe of 1716. Born in Bologna, he became an actor at the age of fifteen. He was engaged as a clown in a small troupe under the management of a certain Girolamo, a charlatan who sold his unguents by the aid of his farces, in 1681. After a short while Bissoni found himself as wise as his master. He became first his partner and afterwards his competitor. He set out to sell his unguents in Milan; but, finding himself forestalled there by another, and being in danger of starving, he bethought him of a stratagem which was successful.

He set up his trestles in an open place near that in which his rival was operating. He boasted with emphasis the efficacy of his drugs. "But why should I boast of them?" he asked the crowd. "You know all my remedies; they are the same as those of the operator, my neighbour here, for I am his son."

Thereupon he proceeded to invent a very likely story. He related that this rigorous parent had cursed him, on account of certain youthful follies, had driven him from home and refused to recognise him. This speech was reported to the other operator. Bissoni, profiting by the emotion of the crowd, went with a penitent air and a countenance bathed in tears, to throw himself on his knees before his pretended father and to implore pardon for his faults. The other maintained the fictitious character imposed on him far beyond all hopes that Bissoni could have entertained: he called him fool and rogue, and protested that, far from being his father, he did not even know him. The higher rose the anger of that operator against the swindle perpetrated by Bissoni, the more did the people

become concerned in the fate of this poor youngster, until in the end they were so deeply moved that they not only purchased all his drugs, but made him presents in addition.

Bissoni, satisfied with his success, and fearing lest the truth should come to light, hastened to depart from Milan. Soon afterwards he abandoned the trade of charlatan and joined an itinerant troupe in which he played the parts of Scapin. Later he entered the service of M. Albergotti, as *maître d'hôtel*, travelled in France with him, and then returned to Italy. It was there that Riccoboni found him when he was assembling the company for the Regent of France, and he engaged him for the Comédie-Italienne to play *Zanni* parts. His talent was mediocre but he continued in this employment until his death, in May of 1723, at the early age of forty-five. He bequeathed all of which he died possessed to Riccoboni, who had frequently rendered him good service.

On the 2nd September 1739 Alessandro Ciavarelli, born in Naples, made his début at the Comédie-Italienne in the part of Scapino.

> " Ciavarelli met tant de grâces
> Quand il représente Scapin,
> Qu'à ses lazzi, à ses grimaces,
> On le prendrait pour Arlequin."

In 1769, Camerani, a very mediocre actor, enjoyed nevertheless a sort of celebrity for his singular capers, and his gluttony, which was the cause of his death. He succumbed to an indigestion of *pâté de foie gras*.

The principal authors had entered into an agreement to obtain from the Théatre-Italien an increased remuneration for their rights. Camerani pronounced himself against them

at the meeting held by the actors, delivering himself on that occasion of the following witticism :—" Sirs, take care. I have already been telling you for some time that as long as there are authors comedy will never thrive."

v

Giovanni Gherardi, of Prato in Tuscany, went to Paris in 1675 to replace, under the name of FLAUTINO, the Brighella of the Italian troupe. He made his début in *Arlecchino Pastore di Lemnos*.

Giovanni Gherardi was a good actor ; he was extremely comical, he played the guitar perfectly and imitated various wind instruments with his throat. He was in himself a whole orchestra.

He remained a very short time in the theatre. His depraved morals led him into trouble. He was imprisoned and upon his liberation immediately quitted France. He left one son, Evaristo Gherardi, the famous Harlequin.

vi

GRADELINO is another variant of the type of Brighella. It was under this name, already known in Italy, that Constantino Constantini went to play in Paris in 1687.

Constantino Constantini was a member of a good family of Verona ; he had set up a factory and was a discoverer of several chemical secrets for the dyeing of cloth. Having fallen in love with a comedienne, not only did he quit his country and his business to follow her, but further induced his legitimate wife

and children to accompany him. Thus in the wake of that actress he wandered through Italy under the name of Gradelino, accompanied by his two sons, Angelo Constantini (*Mezzetin*) and Gian-Battista Constantini (*Ottavia*). When his mistress died, Constantini went to Paris to display there his accomplishments, which were very real, and had already earned him the greatest success in Italy. He conceived the unfortunate notion to sing on the Parisian stage a song composed in Italy against the French. He was so thoroughly booed and hooted, notwithstanding his talent, that he never dared to show himself again.

vii

The earliest MEZZETINI date from the end of the sixteenth century, and had their birth in the *Gelosi* company. They then wore white linen garments, a mask, a hat, a cloak and the wooden sabre of the ancient *Zanni*. Thus they are depicted by Caillot. They were then no more than simple variants of Scapino and Brighella; their costume was the same, their name only was different. But when, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the rôles of *Zanni* assumed a greater importance, the actors who played them adapted their costumes to the tastes of their day, both when they preserved the original type intact and when they modified it.

Angelo Constantini was the first to dress the character of Mezzetin in the striped red and white garments which became characteristic of him. He had been received into the old troupe in 1682 to double Domenico Biancolelli in the rôle of Harlequin; perceiving that the troupe had no second *Zanni*,

no Brighella, he took up that character, and borrowed from the Italian and French buffoons, his predecessors, this striped costume traditional of the *Sannionnes* of antiquity. He discarded the mask which had been worn by Brighella, Beltrame, Scapin and all the earlier *Zanni*, both Italian and French. We know that Molière himself long played lackey parts under a mask. Constantini fashioned the cut of his garments after the mode of his day, whilst preserving the striped fabric.

After the death of Domenico, Mezzetin wore the lozenges of Harlequin and played the same rôles until the arrival of Evaristo Gherardi. Mezzetin then resumed his livery and his character of shrewd lackey, acting sometimes on his own account, playing the parts of deceived or deceiving husbands such as Sganarelle, sometimes appearing as the servant of Ottavio or of Cinthio.

Angelo Constantini, the son of Constantino Constantini, after spending his youth playing in Italy, went to Paris in 1682, and made his first appearance there in *Arlequin Protée*, in the rôle of Glaucus-Mezzetin, whilst Domenico played Protée-Arlequin.

When it fell to his lot to replace Domenico, Constantini received from the hands of Columbine, in a scene prepared *ad hoc*, the garments and the mask of Harlequin. He retained this rôle for a very long time, but he always played it under his own name of Mezzetin. As his countenance, despite its great swarthiness, was comely and mobile, and as he was beloved of the public, the entire audience rose, and, by way of manifesting its esteem for him, shouted: "No mask! No mask!" As a consequence Constantini performed without mask until Evaristo Gherardi came to make his début as Harlequin, and to appropriate the character on his first appearance. Con-

stantini then returned to his rôles of Mezzetin and continued in them until the theatre was closed in 1697.

The brothers Parfait tell the following story of Constantini: —"It is worth while to relate a thing that happened to him at the house of M. le Duc de Saint-Agnan. He had dedicated a play to this nobleman, who was in the habit of paying generously for such dedications; with the object of receiving the recompense he hoped for, he presented himself one morning at the duke's house; but the porter, suspecting the object of his visit, refused to allow him to enter. Mezzetin, to overcome this refusal, offered him a third of such recompense as he might receive from his master, and out of consideration for this promise was allowed to pass. On the stairs he met the head lackey, who proved no less intractable than the porter. Mezzetin promised him another third, and was thus introduced into the ducal apartments. There he found the duke's valet, who showed himself still more inflexible than the other two, and was with difficulty overcome by a promise of the last remaining third. In this fashion nothing was left for poor Mezzetin who, upon beholding the duke, ran to him and cried: 'My lord! here is a theatrical piece which I take the liberty of presenting to you, and for which I beg that you will compensate me by ordering that I be given a hundred lashes.' This extraordinary request amazed the duke, who demanded to know the reason of it. 'It is, my lord,' said Mezzetin, 'that to contrive to reach your presence I have been compelled to promise to your porter, to your lackey and to your valet each one third of whatever you may have the goodness to give me.' The duke severely reprimanded his servants, and sent a hundred louis to the wife of Mezzetin, who had entered into no promises."

The Mezzetin of the plays of Gherardi, although generally softened in his ways, is often the real Brighella of other days, with all his villainy.

MEZZETIN (*to* ISABELLE). Come now, my beauty, tell the truth. Is it not true that you would very willingly become my better half? Look now, consider me—my air, my carriage! Eh? I grow angry when I observe these little embryos attempting to enter into competition with me.

ISABELLE. They must indeed have lost their wits. They are very amusing marionettes.

MEZZETIN. No matter for that. Let us speak of the happiness in store for us.

ISABELLE. These are calculations in which we are sometimes mistaken, and it is not often that we find in marriage all the happiness that we had expected.

MEZZETIN. I am gentle, peaceful, easy to live with, my humour is silk and velvet. I lived six years with my first wife without ever having the slightest dispute.

ISABELLE. That is very extraordinary.

MEZZETIN. I quarrelled with her only once. I had taken snuff and I wanted to sneeze; she caused me to miss my stroke. In my anger I took up a candlestick and broke her head. She died a quarter of an hour afterwards.

ISABELLE. Heavens! Is it possible?

MEZZETIN. That was the only difference we ever had, and it didn't last very long as you can see. If a woman is to die it is better that she should die at the hands of her husband than at those of a doctor, who charges heavy fees, and who may keep her languishing perhaps for six months or a year. I cannot bear to see people languishing.

ISABELLE. And can you think without horror of having committed as black a crime as that?

MEZZETIN. I? Not at all. I am used to blood from my youth. My father had a thousand affairs in his life, and he invariably killed his man. He served the king for thirty-two years.

ISABELLE. On land or sea ?

MEZZETIN. In the air.

ISABELLE. How in the air ? I never heard of such employment.

MEZZETIN. It is that as he was of an extremely charitable disposition, and whenever he happened to meet a doomed man on his way to the gallows, he would get into the cart with him and assist him to die in the best possible manner.

ISABELLE. Oh ! Horror !

MEZZETIN. If you had but seen him at work you would have been inclined to get yourself hanged.

ISABELLE. As these are perhaps family talents, you should have taken up your father's office.

MEZZETIN. I inclined considerably towards it ; but, as you know, it is necessary that a gentleman should travel.

ISABELLE. I perceive only one slight difficulty to our marriage ; it is that I am married already.

MEZZETIN. Married ? Pooh ! What of that ? Shall that embarrass you ? I am also married, but there is nothing easier than to be widowed ; twopennyworth of rat-poison will do the business.

In other scenes of the same repertory, Mezzetin shines only in his clownishness and cowardice.

ISABELLE (*as an inn servant, receiving* MEZZETIN *dressed as a traveller and followed by* HARLEQUIN, *his lackey*). Good-morning, gentlemen, what do you lack ?

HARLEQUIN. Come along, my girl ; a chamber, a fire and the best food. I always put up willingly at a house where the wine is good and the waiting-woman pretty.

ISABELLE. Sirs, you shall have all that you seek, nothing is wanting here.

MEZZETIN (*presenting his booted leg to* ISABELLE). Now then, my girl, off with my boots.

ISABELLE. Draw off your boots ! Indeed, sir, that is not my business.

MEZZETIN. Are you not also the ostler ?

HARLEQUIN (*to* MEZZETIN). Now that seems a resolute girl. But I think that she is ogling you a little.

MEZZETIN. The little rogue is pretty, faith. Come here, my girl ; are you married ?

ISABELLE. No, sir, thank God. I have not that honour ; it is not a good year for girls. All the young men are at the war.

MEZZETIN (*becoming mincing*). If you would but repose me a little from my warlike exploits ? I have money.

ISABELLE. Good ! I am very fortunate, I have never been tempted by money. I prefer a man whom I like to all the treasures of the world, and if you want me to speak frankly, I like your valet better than yourself. (*She strikes* HARLEQUIN *in the stomach with all her strength.*)

HARLEQUIN. Ouf ! Faith, the rogue has good taste. Come, sir, withdraw. This is not meat for your birds. (*Pushing* MEZZETIN *away.*)

MEZZETIN (*approaching her*). The little rogue does not appreciate my merit.

ISABELLE. I beg you, sir, again to be quiet. I do not like to be mauled. If you wish to put up at the inn the door is open. Otherwise—your very humble servant.

(*She attempts to enter the inn,* MEZZETIN *arrests her, seizing one of her arms ;* CINTHIO, *who has seen this, comes out of the inn and rudely thrusts* MEZZETIN *aside.*)

CINTHIO. By virtue of what, sir, if you please, do you permit yourself liberties with this girl ?

MEZZETIN. By virtue of what ? By virtue of my good pleasure.

CINTHIO. Your pleasure ! Listen to me, my ugly little fellow. Don't warm my ears for me because I might find *my* pleasure in something that would not please *you.*

MEZZETIN. Sir, that is not the way to address a Parisian gentleman who returns from Flanders.

CINTHIO. You from Flanders ?

HARLEQUIN (*who has been hiding round the corner out of fear, approaching*). May the devil take us if we are not !

MEZZETIN (*standing squarely*). Oh no, we were not there when our general issued his summons to the enemies; they did not appear on the last day of July to plead on the battlefield. The case was called and it lasted for eight hours, but by virtue of good pieces of cannon which we carried we very quickly routed the enemy. They attempted two or three times to appeal, but they were always dislodged from their opposition and condemned to pay expenses, damages, interests and costs. Ah! *and* costs! Well then, were we there? Oh no! I am but jesting!

CINTHIO. As far as I can see, sir, you have observed the battle in some lawyer's office. But I recommend you to go your ways and not to look behind you.

MEZZETIN. Sir, have a care what you do. Should you insult me. . . . (*He draws his sword,* CINTHIO *carries his hand to his own hilt.*)

CINTHIO. Well?

MEZZETIN (*hiding behind* HARLEQUIN). You will have to deal with my lackey.

HARLEQUIN (*running off*). I am not obliged to get myself killed in your place.

CINTHIO. Begone! I don't deign to answer you. But if you come ogling this girl again I'll beat you to death. (*He flicks* MEZZETIN'S *nose with his gloves and departs.*)

MEZZETIN (*after* CINTHIO *has gone*). But he is going for all that! (*To* HARLEQUIN.) Heh! What do you think of it? I nailed him all right, didn't I?

Sometimes Mezzetin would sing in parodies, accompanying himself on the guitar. Watteau painted him playing this instrument amid the various actors of the Comédie-Italienne: Isabelle, Ottavio, Columbine, and the rest.

He also sang and danced in allegorical costumes in the ballets which concluded most of the plays, or, after having played the rôle of the servant of Ottavio throughout the piece, he would

disappear in the last act to go and make up as an American Indian.

After the suppression of the theatre and the company in 1697, Constantini set out for Germany to seek employment. He had found an engagement in a company at Brunswick, when Augustus I., King of Poland, who had heard of him, made him a proposal. Constantini accepted it, and found himself charged by this prince with the formation of a company which was alternately to play Italian comedy and sing Italian opera. He went to France in 1698 to recruit his company, and discharged his mission so well that in the following year Augustus I. named him chamberlain and treasurer of his entertainments, and ennobled him.

Such brilliant fortune, however, could not endure. The daring and enterprising Mezzetin fell in love with the king's mistress, and declared himself. Nor did he stop there; he set himself to depreciate the king in the spirit of this lady. The lady, it is said, was indignant at the insolence of the comedian. The king was informed of what had passed and concealed himself in the lady's chamber, where an assignation had been given to Constantini. What happened no one knows beyond the fact that Augustus came forth in a fury, sword in hand, threatening the comedian's death. "But probably he felt that it was not fitting that he should soil his hands in the blood of a man who had betrayed him so unworthily." He ordered his arrest, and had him imprisoned in the castle of Königstein.

Mezzetin remained for twenty years in this fortress. At last another lady of the court, who then enjoyed some influence over the heart of Augustus, induced the King of Poland

to visit his fortress-prison of state. There she summoned Constantini, who appeared "with a beard which he had allowed to grow ever since his arrest." He flung himself at the king's feet, but notwithstanding that the lady added her supplications to the actor's, Augustus remained inexorable and refused the solicited mercy. This lady, however, continued her efforts with such good result that a few months later Constantini was restored to liberty. "All his property was restored to him, but he was commanded to quit Dresden and the state of Saxony."

Mezzetin set out for Verona, but he remained there only a little while. Anxious to revisit Paris and to return to the stage where so long he had played with success, he joined the new company of the Regent, and was received into it with joy and surprise. He made arrangements with his old comrades to perform in five or six pieces for the payment of a thousand crowns, and he reappeared on the stage on the 5th February 1729.

In the *Mercure de France* for the month of February 1729 you may read:

"The Sieur Angelo Constantini, a native of Verona, known heretofore by the name of Mezzetin, a comedian of the old Hôtel de Bourgogne, played in the same theatre, and made his début in the rôles which he had erstwhile performed in the comedy entitled *La Foire Saint-Germain*, originally presented in 1695.

"This piece was preceded by a prologue by the Sieur Lelio, the son, of which the following is the subject:—

"Momus and Harlequin first make their appearance.

Momus complains that his place should so long have been abandoned. He inquires of Harlequin the cause, and Harlequin imputes it to the extreme love of the French for novelty. Momus promises to remedy this difficulty by a novelty which shall surpass all others. By his orders a venerable old man comes forward; he explains that this is the Mezzetin of the old Italian theatre. At a further order from the god who introduces him, and who takes him under his protection, he casts aside his old man's robe, and appears in the garb of Mezzetin. Momus recites a fable on the subject of old age. This fable does not at first seem favourable to an old man of seventy-five, but Momus consoles him with a tap from his bauble, thereby shedding upon this beloved disciple a pleasant folly which is to take the place of youth."

Mezzetin then relates a dream which he has just had. He dreamed himself, he says, in Paris, on the Italian stage; he beheld a guitar issuing from the boards and he was singing again notwithstanding his great age. Whilst he is relating this a guitar is, in fact, thrust upwards. He takes it, tunes it and sings to his own accompaniment, addressing the groundlings:

"Mezzetin, par d'heureux talens,
Voudroit vous satisfaire;
Quoiqu'il soit dupuis très long-temps
Presque sexagénaire;
Il rajeunira de trente ans
S'il peut encor vous plaire."

There was such a concourse of spectators that, notwithstanding that the prices of admission had been doubled, as many people had to be turned away as it was found possible to admit.

He gave five performances, and a few days later set out for

Verona, leaving in Paris "more creditors than reputation," according to one of his detractors. He died in Italy at the end of that same year, 1729.

Angelo Constantini had married in Italy Auretta, the daughter of Dorsi and of the famous actress Angiola. Auretta was seen in Paris at the Italian theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne; but she was not a success. Her talents and appearance were only mediocre. Thence she went to Germany. Of this marriage were born a daughter who became a nun at Chaumont, and a son named Gabriele Constantini who played Harlequin in Italy.

viii

Narcisino is a native of the town of Malalbergo, between Bologna and Ferrara. The Bolognese, having already in the Doctor a character which spoke the dialect of the educated classes, the actor Ricconi created, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, another personage speaking that of the lower orders—a dialect which is almost a different language from that which is spoken still to-day. This character was, in the seventeenth century, sometimes a stupid servant, sometimes a master; further he would very often play the rôles of fathers and of guardians usually imbecile, stupid, and as obstinate and malicious as possible. He shared these duties with Tabarino and Fitoncello, rôles which, like those of Beltrame and Sganarelle, served two purposes, and were created—or rather reconstructed—by the actor Bigher, in Bologna.

Narcisino was still held in great esteem and enjoyed a great

vogue in Bologna at the beginning of the nineteenth century. His part was then a singular one. He scarcely appeared at all in the course of the actual plays, coming upon the stage merely to utter or perform some buffoonery which had no connection with the scenic action.

Wearing a straw hat, his hair long like that of the peasants, dressed in extremely wide coat and breeches, in red and green stripes, sometimes with a cloak on his arm or a basket of fruit in his hand, he would come during the entr'acte to perform an interlude and to chat with the audience, criticising the manners of his day, and relating amusing adventures of the suburbs and the country. He was a sort of Pasquino or Bruscambille. He was accorded the right to say anything he chose, but he was obliged to confine himself to generalisations, avoiding personalities that were too pointed.

"Sirs! It must be confessed, and you will confess it with me I am sure, that falsehood is a curious thing. Should there be any liars in the theatre I beg them to have the goodness to depart so that they may not hear what I am going to say." (*He pauses a moment.*) "Well, then! Does no one depart? I see, sirs, that we are all men of sincerity. I may tell you then between men. . . . Ah! but I perceive some women yonder! All sincere and frank ladies are entreated to remain; those who are addicted to falsehood may return home to see whether the wine is turning sour in their cellars." (*A pause.*) "Not a lady departs. Well done, ladies! I see that I have round me nothing but frankness and loyalty." (*He goes to one side of the stage, stoops, and, with his hand to his mouth, as if he were speaking secretly in the ear of each:*) "I

don't believe it for a moment, but they wish to be taken for something that they are not! Now, since frankness and truth reign here, I will tell you in confidence that women must imagine men to be far more stupid than they are, to relate to them a heap of inventions which they have the air of believing and of accepting as current coin until one day when, weary of this tissue of diabolic invention, they dismiss the lies together with the women who utter them.

"I ask you now, ladies (yes, it is to you in particular that I address myself), is it not true that when you don't even so much as stir your tongues you still indulge in falsehood by means of your raiment? I ask you whether it is not the greatest falsehood that a woman could invent to lead us to believe in the existence of that which she does not possess. I see it every day. The thinnest women parade themselves in petticoats of the rotundity of the cupola of Saint-Mark in Venice. The streets of Bologna are now too narrow, for our ladies are compelled to go afoot—there are no carriages capable of containing them. I ask you what is the result of all this? Under these mendacious cruppers what is there? Nothing!"

In another interlude he says: "Sirs, let all misers depart quickly, lest they might employ their ears in listening to me! Since no one budges I may speak freely. How foolish are those people who spend some forty years of their lives in piling farthing upon farthing to make halfpence, and halfpence upon halfpence to make livres, and livres upon livres to make louis! By the time that they have amassed sufficient for enjoyment they can no longer make use of their fortune; old age has exhausted them. Let the exhausted ones depart, I am going to address young people in the prime of life. Oh, you young fools,

who think but of eating, drinking and making love! Is that the aim of existence? I pause, sirs; we are in the theatre and not at a sermon." And, with a pirouette like that of Stenterello, he disappears.

ix

There are several French characters derived from the type of Scapino, among which the principal ones are Turlupin, Gandolin, Grattelard and Jodelet.

Turlupin (unlucky, unfortunate) was created at the end of the sixteenth century at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, by Henri Legrand. He played the rôle for more than fifty years in a costume greatly resembling that of Brighella in point of shape, and somewhat derived from that of Harlequin in point of colour.

Turlupin was of great fecundity in quips, puns, cock-and-bull tales and gibberish, and in that style of jests which derived from him the name of *turlupinades*. Like most of the French comedians of his day he helped himself to what he found available; but the most prolific source was undoubtedly Rabelais.[1]

[1] *Les Bigarrures et touches du seigneur des Accords, Les Apophthegmes du sieur Gaulard* and *Les Escraignes dijonnoises* (1560), as well as the *Vaillans faits d'armes de Bolorospe* (1633), must have supplied Turlupin with matter to be embroidered and amplified into texts of the style of the following:—

"... Habillé de vert (de gris), parfumé (comme un jambon) d'odeur (de sainteté), et enveloppé d'un manteau (de cheminée). Il rencontre une dame parée d'une belle robe (d'avocat), d'une fine fraise (de veau) et d'une riche côte (de melon), bordée, d'un filet (de vinaigre)." Then follows the description of his hero: "Il a un corps (de garde), une

" He was an excellent comedian," says Sauval ; " his sallies were full of wit, fire and judgment ; in a word, he was short of nothing but a little naïveté ; and notwithstanding this, everyone confesses never to have seen his like. Although florid he was a handsome well-made man, with a pleasing countenance. He was astute, witty and amusing in conversation." He entered the theatre in 1583 and spent his life there, quitting it only for the grave which was accorded him in the church of Saint-Sauveur in 1637.

In the French troupe at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, " Gros-Guillaume," says Tallemant, " was *le fariné*, Gaultier the old man, and Turlupin the rogue. The latter also played the part of *Zanni*, who was regarded as the facetious one of the company, and in that character he wore a costume similar to that of Brighella, with the little cloak and pantaloon."

Turlupin was a man of well-ordered life, a husband who would not suffer his wife to enter the theatre, and who lived after the fashion of a bourgeois. He devoted long hours to learning his rôles. " He studied his trade assiduously, and it would happen sometimes that when a man of quality who

tête (d'épingle), un cou (de tonnerre), des épaules (de mouton), des bras (de mer), une main (de papier), un pied (de cochon), un dos (d'âne), une langue (étrangère), une haleine (de savetier). Il était fort bien vêtu, il avait de belles chemises de toile (d'araignée), un rabat de point (du jour), une culotte (de bœuf). . . . Sa maison était bâtie de pierres (philosophales), soutenue de piliers (de cabaret), et on y entrait par deux cours (de chimie), d'où on montait vingt-cinq degrés (de chaleur), et on se trouvait dans une grande chambre (de justice). . . . Il courait à la chasse suivi d'une meute de chiens (-dent), de quatre valets (de pique), montés sur des chevaux (de frise) portant des lacs (d'amour) et des filets (de canards). . . . Il visitait souvent ses châteaux (en Espagne), ses terres et ses champs (de bataille) . . . et mourut d'une chute (d'eau), etc., etc."

esteemed him invited him to dinner he would answer that he must study."

Louis Legrand, his son, upheld the celebrity of his father. He made his début, under the same name of Turlupin, in December, 1620, and lived until 1655.

x

Grattelard (1620), a French buffoon of the tabarinic farces, surnamed by derision the Baron Grattelard, is another type of cunning lackey. His costume is very similar to that of Trivelino. Like Trivelino he wears a doublet and pantaloon in the Italian fashion, very wide and embroidered with deep-coloured triangular designs upon a pale ground. He wears also the half mask, the chin-piece and the skull cap, the wide pleated collar, the lath and the light coloured shoes, a cap like Brighella's but no cloak. Above a portrait of this character lately discovered in the Bibliothèque des Estampes the following distich is to be read :—

"Ma mime n'est belle ny bonne,
Et je vous jure sur ma foy
Qu'on peut bien se fier à moy,
Car je ne me fie à personne."

The same engraving presents two other characters of the same epoch—*Jasmin* (a sort of Crispin) and *Jean Broche* or *Boche*, who is somewhat related to the Italian Doctors.

Already before Grattelard, other French buffoons had attached to their theatre-names titles borrowed derisively from the nobility : *Le Comte de Salles*, *Le Marquis d'Argencourt*, *Le Baron de Plancy* and *Le Comte de Permission*.

SCAPINO

The most brilliant rôle of Grattelard is in the farce of *The Three Hunchbacks*, a story drawn from the *Facétieuses Nuits* of Straparole, who himself derived it from an Eastern source.

The Farce of the Hunchbacks

"Trostolle the hunchback has three hunchback brothers, the sight of whom he cannot bear. He is filled with horror of misshapen people. One day, being compelled to leave home, he enjoins his wife to lock up after dinner and not to allow anyone to enter. He does not wish to find his brothers there, in which case he would lay the stick across Madame's back. Thereupon he departs. Madame Trostolle has a love intrigue with a certain Horace, who sends her his servant Grattelard with a love letter.

"The husband being gone, the three hunchbacks arrive with stomachs as hollow as wells and teeth as sharp as wolves'.

"'It is a long time since we have eaten,' says the first hunchback, 'and at need my belly might serve as a lantern.'

"'Here is the house of my brother,' says the second, 'let us go in.'

"The third knocks at the door. But Madame Trostolle recognises them from their humps. Nevertheless she permits herself to be moved by their entreaties, admits them and sets food before them. But Trostolle returns and she hides the three brothers. Trostolle, whilst suspecting the presence of the hunchbacks, departs again upon receiving his wife's assurances that no one has entered the house. She runs then to her brothers-in-law and finds them drunk.

"'I think,' she says, 'that they have a reservoir on their

backs, for they have emptied a hogshead. However, they must be got out of this.'

"Grattelard arrives with his letter: 'Consider my trouble,' says Madame Trostolle. 'A hunchback has dropped dead on my threshold. You must take him to the river.'

"'What will you give me?'

"'Twenty crowns.'

"'Very good. Let us get to business.'

"'Very well; here is the fellow.'

"'He is very heavy,' says Grattelard, and thereupon shoulders the hunchback and departs to throw him into the water.

"'I have made a bargain to get him to carry one away; I must contrive that he shall carry away all three,' says Madame.

"Grattelard returns. 'I have thrown him into the water,' he announces. 'But he was very heavy!'

"'You are mocking me,' replies the woman. 'You must have thrown him in very badly, for he has come back again. Look! Here he is!'

"'To the devil with the hunchback! I will load my shoulders with him again and carry him back to the river.'

"He goes and returns, but still he finds a hunchback.

"'Don't you understand that he will always come back?' says Madame Trostolle; 'you don't know how to go about it.'

"'Mordienne!' says Grattelard. 'I shall end by getting angry! I shall take him back again, but if he makes another appearance I shall put a stone round his neck.' And for the

third time he carries off the hunchback, whilst Madame goes off on the other side.

"Trostolle returns; he has discharged his affairs and wishes to assure himself that his brothers have not been to his house.

"'How now! Death of my life!' cries Grattelard, who has returned for the third time, and perceives Trostolle, 'there is my hunchback again! To the river, my hunchback! To the river!'

"He seizes the husband, and carries him off like the others. That done he returns to receive the promised twenty crowns.

"'Well, have you thrown him into the river?' inquires Madame Trostolle.

"'I had to carry him there four times!' answers Grattelard; 'he persisted in coming back, but this time——'

"'Four times! Has he by chance put my husband with the others?'

"'Faith, the last one at least could talk!'

"'Oh! what have you done?' cries the woman. 'You have thrown my husband into the water!'

"'There's no great harm done! He was a hunchback who could never have been straight. Here, this is a letter from Master Horace.'

"'Is he far from here?' she asks.

"'Since your husband is dead,' is the answer, 'you had best marry him. Lo, here he comes!'

"'Madame,' says Horace, 'if the affection which I bear you may serve as a warrant to permit me to present to you my vows, you may believe that I am the most faithful of your subjects.'"

xi

JODELET, a clownish lackey, ingenuous and stupid of appearance, was played in the French troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne by Julien Geoffrin, from 1610 to 1660. In shape his costume is that of Beltrame ; as to its colour, he wears a black cap, striped doublet, trunk and hose, the mask of Brighella and the black chin-piece, the cloak, purse and wooden sabre of all similar types.

It was for the character of this personage that Scarron wrote *Jodelet Duelliste* and *Jodelet Maître et Valet* in 1645.

We have also *Jodelet Astrologue*, a comedy by d'Ouville, 1646 ; and *La Feinte Mort de Jodelet*, a comedy by Brécourt, 1660.

Julien Geoffrin was the last to play *la farce* in France.

"For one who plays the naïve with his face plastered with flour" (says Tallemant) "he is a good actor. Farce is no longer played save at the Marais, where he is, and it is on his account that it is played there. Jodelet speaks through his nose in consequence of not having been properly treated . . . and that lends him a certain quaintness."

Jodelet played also sometimes with the Italian troupe.

Gilotin, Tripotin and Filipin played in farces at the French theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne (1655). Filipin, whose real name was Villiers, played the same rôles as Jodelet. Scarron wrote for him *Le Gardien de Soi-Même*. He wore the black mask of the Italian lackeys, and a red cap adorned by two feathers.

(1635) Goguelu was a French mask who appears to have

attempted to replace Gros-Guillaume at the theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. He wore wide pantaloons, a doublet like that of Brighella, the cloak, skull cap and exaggerated moustache of the Italian buffoons.

Bruscambille, another type of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, was created by Deslauriers. He was a native of Champagne, an actor and an author, and he made his first appearance in 1598, on the trestles of Jean Farine, joining the company of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1634.

XIV

SCARAMOUCHE

SCARAMOUCHE is the son or the grandson of Matamoros. His name, which signifies "little fighter" or "skirmisher," and his primitive Neapolitan type, would place him in the category of Captains, if Tiberio Fiurelli had not endowed him in France with every shade of character.

The costume of Scaramouche has never varied in point of colour; he has always been dressed in black from head to foot. Riccoboni says that "in point of cut it is an imitation of the Spanish dress, which, in the city of Naples, had long been the dress of courtiers, of magistrates and men of war. Towards 1680 the Spanish Captains came to an end in Italy, and the old Italian Captain having long been forgotten, it became necessary to find in the companies of Neapolitan comedians an actor to replace the Spanish Captain; thus Scaramuccia was created. In Italy this personage has never had any character other than that of the Captain; he is at once a boaster and a coward."

Originally he wore a mask, like all the types that date back to this epoch. In his *Petits Danseurs*, Callot represents the Scaramuccia of the *Fedeli* company (whose real name was Goldoni) wearing a mask and brandishing a sword. His costume differs but little from what it afterwards became with Fiurelli, excepting the slashings in his doublet and in his plumed cap, which suggest that the date of the creation of this type is the end of the sixteenth century.

Tiberio Fiurelli, the most famous of all Scaramouches, discarded the mask, floured his countenance and, by his facial play, "was the greatest mime in the world." The breeches that he wore at first were wide, afterwards he assumed those which remained traditional to the type. The girdle has sometimes been of cloth like the costume, sometimes of leather. Trimmings and buttons were always of the colour of the dress.

Scaramouche proclaims himself marquis, prince or lord of several countries which have never existed in any geographical chart. He was, he says, abandoned in his early youth by his illustrious father, and reared at the expense of some king or other, who caused him to spend his early years at the oar of a royal galley. It is not to be doubted that he found his way to the galleys later on, for he is the greatest thief that ever breathed. He inherits all the boast and brag and poltroonery of his father the Captain. Like him he is in love with all women; but his pale countenance and evil reputation afford him few chances with the fair sex. He avenges himself for his rebuffs by boasting of illusory favours and by maligning the women whom he pretends to have jilted.

Notwithstanding his pretensions to nobility, for he claims to be as noble as Charlemagne, and as rich as another ancestor of his named Crœsus, he is nearly always the servant of a very minor gentleman, or of a poor bourgeois, who employs him in the conduct of his love affairs. But instead of doing his duty he prefers to amuse himself by beating the watch and thieving from passers-by. In short, Scaramouche is a good-for-nothing who finds delight only in disorder. If there are any blows to be received in payment for his rascalities, he is sly enough to

procure for some neighbour the windfall that was destined for himself. There is a perfect understanding between him and Pulcinella, who is another rogue of his kidney. It is thus that, arm-in-arm, the one shouting and gesticulating brutally, the other bellowing, leaping and wheeling his sword about the ears of peaceful citizens, they sweep the pavement, ogling the same women and thirsting for the same bottles. It is rarely that the matter does not end in a dispute between these two gossips. Pulcinella becomes angry, and Scaramouche vanishes.

"Where is that poltroon, that coward?" cries Pulcinella, pounding the tables with his great knotted cudgel.

When the formidable fellow's anger is spent Scaramouche returns to reprimand his friend upon his evil inclinations, his irascibility, drunkenness and egoism; it is a speech full of good sense and morality, to which Pulcinella listens absent-mindedly rubbing his hump. Most of the time he does not listen at all, for he has no esteem whatever for this poltroon. The matter, however, ends invariably in libations, and it is glass in hand and his brain a little heated that Scaramouche gives a free rein to his brilliant imagination. He will thus relate all his exploits of gallantry to Pulcinella, who does not interrupt him save by occasional exclamations of admiring astonishment, or by little mocking laughs, which indicate his incredulity.

Suddenly, however, pots, glasses and bottles fly into fragments. Pulcinella, wearied by all this chatter of Scaramouche, swings his devastating club to put an end to the conversation; then he gets up and, without paying his share, departs sneering.

Scaramouche has gone into hiding at the crash, and does not show himself again until his comrade is far away.

"What an ass!" he exclaims. "What an animal! What

rude, unmannerly ways! Next time I shall correct him thoroughly; I shall pull his ears."

Upon the remark of a third party, who accuses him of having been afraid, he replies like Panurge: "Afraid? I? I have a deal of courage. I do not mean the courage of the lamb, but the courage of the wolf, and even more the courage of the slayer."

Scaramouche is like the bowman of Bagnolet, "he fears nothing but danger."

Tiberio Fiurèlli was born in Naples on the 7th November 1608. Although the son of a cavalry captain, he was, at the age of twenty-five, employed as a servant by the leading lady of a company that then enjoyed a good repute in Naples. He was a utility man, and played small parts from time to time.

One day the laundress of the comedienne who employed him told Fiurelli that her daughter's best friend was about to be married and that her daughter was to be one of the bridesmaids; she invited him to the nuptials, knowing him for a young man of jovial humour. The marriage was a brilliant affair; there was a deal of drinking and dancing; Fiurelli distinguished himself by eating as much as two and drinking as much as four. As a result, in the course of the dance, driven no doubt largely by the wine into an amorous transport, he kissed the bridesmaid notwithstanding her resistance. The insult was considered of a grave character, particularly as it had been offered in public, and it was judged to be reparable only by marriage. On the morrow the laundress, having assembled witnesses and the members of her family, came to demand justice from the mistress of Fiurelli. The accused appeared, but had nothing to say. He could remember nothing of what had

happened yesterday. The laundress, having reminded him of everything, threatened to lay a plaint before the magistrates if he did not repair his fault and make the amend demanded by the honour of the family. Having taken counsel with the actress whom he served, Fiurelli decided to marry the young laundress, who was very pretty.

Some time after their nuptials, Fiurelli and his wife joined a company of comedians. Madame Fiurelli took the name of *Marinette*, which was probably her own, for she was the first soubrette to bear it. Fiurelli himself assumed the name of Scaramouche. Angelo Constantini, the author of *The Life, Loves and Deeds of Scaramouche*, says that Fiurelli was the creator of this type; but he is at fault in this statement as in several others in his biography. Evaristo Gherardi severely trounces this work of Constantini's: "If those," he says, "who have spoken so unworthily of Fiurelli, and who have made use of his name to produce an infinity of wretched quips and bad jests are capable of shame, let them come candle in hand to make reparation to the manes of so great a man, that they may avoid the punishment which impostors deserve before God and humanity. There is nothing more impious than to exhume a man for the purpose of covering him with calumny."

Nature had marvellously endowed Fiurelli, and his name very quickly became famous throughout all Italy as that of the most perfect and witty mime that had ever existed. After having visited most of the great cities of Italy, he went to Paris in the reign of Louis XIII., in 1640, and enjoyed there an equal degree of success.

The queen took great pleasure in his mimicries. One day, when he and Brigida Bianchi (an actress known—as we have

seen—under the name of Aurelia) were in the chamber of the dauphin (afterwards Louis XIV.), the prince, who was then but two years old, was in such evil temper that nothing could appease his rage and his cries. Scaramouche told the queen that if she would permit him to take the royal child in his arms he would undertake to calm him. The queen having permitted this, he made so many grimaces, performed so many apish tricks, that not only did the child cease to cry, but he was seized with a hilarity whose results ruined the garments of Scaramouche, to the great bursts of laughter of all the ladies and gentlemen present at this scene.

From that day Scaramouche received the order to visit the dauphin every evening to amuse him, together with his dog, his cat, his monkey, his guitar and his parrot. Scaramouche would then be about thirty-three years of age. He was invariably summoned to Paris whenever any Italian troupe was commanded to appear there. Many years later Louis XIV. used to take pleasure in reminding Fiurelli of their first interview, and the great king would laugh heartily when Fiurelli mimed the story of that adventure.

On the subject of Scaramouche, Gherardi writes as follows in the scenario of *Colombine Avocat Pour et Contre*:—

"After having mended everything that is in the chamber, he takes his guitar, drops into an arm-chair and plays whilst awaiting the arrival of his master. Pasquariello comes up softly behind him and beats the time of his music on his shoulders, which terribly frightens Scaramouche. In a word it is now that this incomparable Scaramuccia, who was the ornament of the theatre and the model of the most illustrious

comedians of his day—having taught them that art so difficult and so necessary to persons of their *character*, how to stir up passions and to depict them—it is now, I say, that for a long quarter of an hour he could shake the audience with laughter at a scene of terror in which he did not utter a single word. It must also be agreed that this excellent actor possessed this marvellous gift in so high a degree that he could move the hearts of his audience by the simplicity and naturalness of his mimicry far more than they are ordinarily to be moved by the most able orators or by the charms of the most persuasive rhetoric. A great prince, seeing him play once in Rome, said of him: 'Without speaking Scaramouche says the most beautiful things in the world.' And to mark the esteem conceived for him, the prince sent for him when the comedy was ended, and made him a present of the coach and six horses in which he had had him fetched. He was always the delight of all the princes who knew him, and our invincible monarch never wearied of heaping favours upon him. I dare even to persuade myself that if he were not dead the company would still be in existence."

In 1659 a rumour was abroad that in the course of journeying into Italy Fiurelli had been shipwrecked and drowned whilst crossing the Rhone, an adventure which was celebrated in verse by Loret.

Fiurelli made frequent journeys into Italy to visit his wife Marinette. His last visit was a very protracted one; he remained with her for seven years, and returned to Paris only after her death. He established himself there permanently, and remained on the stage until the age of eighty-three. Having

then retired, he fell in love with a young girl named Mademoiselle Duval, who was tall, well made and very beautiful, the daughter of a servant of the Président de Harlay. He sought her in marriage and obtained her.

The first months of the honeymoon were spent peacefully; but soon Fiurelli's jealous and avaricious nature was revealed. After all, he was perhaps right to suspect and to complain. There was too great a difference in age between them and the young woman was coquettish. Scaramouche sought to enforce his rights and his authority; but his young wife refused to endure lessons and corrections; she sought shelter with her parents and took proceedings against him to obtain a separation. Fiurelli on his side accused her of infidelity, and demanded that her hair be cut and she be sent to a convent. The affair made a deal of noise, and four years were spent in preparing the case for the courts. Before it was completed Fiurelli died, on the 5th December 1696, at the age of eighty-eight.

At eighty-three he still displayed such agility that in his pantomime scenes he could box the ears of a fellow-actor with his foot. With a slight and supple body he combined a strength and litheness that were extraordinary.

We know that Molière testified ever for Fiurelli an unlimited admiration. It has been said, and there is reason to believe it, that it was the incomparable Scaramouche who determined the vocation of this illustrious child when he was taken by his grandfather to witness Fiurelli's performances. It was by these that Molière was inspired to embrace the profession of the theatre. It has also been said that as a comic actor Molière always sought to imitate the Italians, Trivelino in particular, but Scaramouche above all. It is well known that Molière was

Italian rather than French in his ways, both as author and comedian; that for his first essays, not only for his scenarii but still more for his written pieces, he tapped the sources afforded by the Italian repertory, and that the two companies played in his day the same subjects in the same theatre, whilst the Italians made no affectations of claiming priority, and Molière did not dream of contesting it them. For the rest these borrowings became reciprocal, as may be gathered from the fact that *Scaramouche Ermite* scored a success at court, whilst *Tartuffe* gave rise there to indignation.

At the foot of a portrait of Fiurelli in the dress of Scaramouche is the legend:

Tibère Fiorilli, dit Scaramouche, le grand original des théâtres modernes.

"Cet illustre comédien
Atteignit de son art l'agréable manière:
Il fut le maître de Molière,
Et la nature fut le sien."

Let us take a glimpse of him at work in some entirely Italian scenes preserved in Gherardi's collection.

"Ottavio, having given Angélique an assignation in the Tuileries, desires that a gallant collation shall be prepared so as to afford her a pleasant surprise. He begs Scaramouche to attend to it and departs. Scaramouche, left on the stage, falls into a reverie. Harlequin enters and Scaramouche begs of him to think of a way but without telling him what is the subject. Thereupon the two of them walk up and down the stage, their heads in their hands, and from time to time one turns to the other exclaiming: 'Faith, I have it!' to add afterwards: 'No, that idea is worth nothing,' and to recommence their goings and comings in silence. Suddenly they

meet, and Scaramouche exclaims: 'Ah, this is sure to succeed!' Whereupon they depart without any further explanations."

In another scene:

CINTHIO (*approaching* SCARAMOUCHE). *Come vi chiamate?* (What is your name?)

SCARAMOUCHE. What is my name?

CINTHIO. *Si, il vostro nome, qual è?* (Yes, what is your name?)

SCARAMOUCHE. *Il mio nome, signor, è* (My name, sir, is) Scaramuzza, Memeo Squaquara, Tammera, Catambera, *e figlio di* (a son of) Cocumaro and of Madonna Papara Trent'ova, e Iunze, e Dunze, e Tiracarunze, *per servire a vossignoria* (to serve your lordship).

CINTHIO. *O che bel nom! in verità, non si puo far de più!* (What a beautiful name! A better were impossible!) (*He pulls out his purse.*) Here, this is for Scaramouche. This is for Memeo Squaquara. This is for Tammera and Catambera. (*At each name he gives him a coin.*) And the rest of the purse for the rest of your name.

SCARAMOUCHE (*aside*). This fellow must be a collector of names. (*To* CINTHIO.) Sir, I have still several other names in my family as beautiful and as long as my own. If you want them you have but to mention it.

Scaramouche, having heard of the issue of a warrant for the arrest of Harlequin, his master, under his assumed name of the Marquis of Sbrufadelli, dresses himself as a woman so as to escape.

HARLEQUIN. Ha! Ha! here is some demoiselle from the Pont Neuf. Good-morning, madam. Your servant.

SCARAMOUCHE. Sir, indicate to me, if you please, the way to La Grève?[1]

[1] The site of the gallows.

HARLEQUIN (*mockingly*). You have but to go on as you have started. Stick to your present ways and you will go straight there.

SCARAMOUCHE. I will hurry then, for I fear lest I should not find room.

HARLEQUIN. There is no need to hurry, there will always be room for you.

SCARAMOUCHE. The truth is, sir, that they are going to hang the Marquis of Sbrufadelli, and he will be, they say, the most comical corpse in the world, so that everyone is hurrying to see him.

HARLEQUIN (*angrily*). Those who told you that are ill-informed. The Marquis of Sbrufadelli is a man of honour and he will not be hanged. Do you understand ?

SCARAMOUCHE. But I tell you that he will be. That it is absolutely necessary that he should be, since all the windows are already let.

HARLEQUIN. That is a fine necessity—to hang a man because the windows are let. Go your ways, madam, you don't know what you are saying.

SCARAMOUCHE. It will be a very pretty show. I am dying to see it. He married two wives and they are going to hang two petticoats beside him. Oh, what a pretty show to see! Oh, how droll it will be!

HARLEQUIN. I shall end by losing my temper. I tell you again that I know the Marquis of Sbrufadelli, and——

SCARAMOUCHE (*revealing himself*). Yes, and I know him too.

HARLEQUIN. Scaramouche ?

SCARAMOUCHE. Yes, sir. I have disguised myself in this fashion because I know that the Doctor is seeking you to have you put in prison. He is at the head of twenty archers, and I should be sorry if they compelled me to keep you company. You know very well that I have had nothing to do with your affairs, and that this would never have happened to you if you had followed my advice.

HARLEQUIN. This is not a time to be moralising——

SCARAMOUCHE. Oh, sir, you have waited too long, we are lost. Here comes the Doctor.

The archers arrive with the Doctor. Harlequin, not knowing where to conceal himself, dives under the petticoats of Scaramouche. The Doctor is furious. He seeks Harlequin and comes face to face with Scaramouche. He gives him good-day with a mocking air, and, observing that he is holding his sides and groaning, asks him what is the matter.

SCARAMOUCHE. I beg you to let me go, sir. I am pregnant and in pain.

THE DOCTOR. This is very distressing! But we must see about getting you away from here because I am looking for a certain man whom I am going to arrest, and if he should come this way the archers might hurt you in the tumult.

SCARAMOUCHE. And what is the name, sir, of him you are seeking to arrest?

THE DOCTOR. He is called the Marquis of Sbrufadelli.

HARLEQUIN (*thrusting his head from under the petticoat*). The Marquis of Sbrufadelli, sir? The Marquis of Sbrufadelli is gone!

THE DOCTOR (*hearing a voice but seeing no one*). Who spoke then?

SCARAMOUCHE. It is my unborn child, sir. (*Aside to* HARLEQUIN:) Be quiet, animal, or you will be discovered.

THE DOCTOR (*suspiciously*). Your unborn child, is it? He is a well-nourished child.

SCARAMOUCHE. Indeed yes, sir. I have never spared my children anything.

THE DOCTOR. So I perceive, since they talk before birth. (*Leaning over* SCARAMOUCHE.) Master child, you say then that the Marquis of Sbrufadelli is gone?

HARLEQUIN (*thrusting out his head*). Yes, sir, he departed by the mail coach. It should suffice you to be told once.

THE DOCTOR. That is very true, sir. I beg your pardon for my importunity. (*To the archers.*) Corporal Simon! Take

me that child and put him in prison at once. He is a little debauchee at much too early an age, and must be sent to a reformatory.

The archers seize Harlequin and bear him off; Scaramouche escapes crying: "*Salvo! salvo!*"

When Tiberio Fiurelli withdrew from the Théâtre-Italien in 1694, the rôles of Scaramouche were filled by Giuseppe Tortoretti, who had been playing Pasquariello until then.

ii

"On the day of PASQUARIELLO's birth, the cat stole the roast meat, the candle turned pale thrice, the wine turned sour in the cellar, and—incredible prodigy!—the stock-pot emptied itself into the ashes. Evil prognostications! Faithful to them Pasquariello was ever a glutton, a drunkard and a devastator, the ruin and the terror of kitchens."

This name of Pascariel, or Pasquariel as it is written by Gherardi, is no doubt a diminutive of Pasquino, the Roman emblem of satire.

In the sixteenth century Pasquariello was a dancer and a mountebank like Meo Squaquara, from whom Scaramouche claims descent. These personages are depicted by Callot. They are dressed in tight garments, with hawk-bells on their legs, they carry sabre and cloak, and wear a mask with a fantastical long nose, but they appear to be without head-dress. Meo Squaquara in particular seems to be bald-headed. Pasquariello bears the surname of *Truonno*—that is to say, the Terrible. It is a type that was not seen in France until

1685, when it was borne thither by Giuseppe Tortoretti. Like its ancestors, his Pasquariello was particularly a dancer and a very clever equilibrist. The rôle is always that of a servant.

The *Mercure Galant* for March of 1685 says :

"The Italian company has been increased by a new actor who earns the applause of all Paris, and who has given similar pleasure at court. He is of a surprising agility and admirably supports the incomparable Harlequin."

Notwithstanding, however, the felicitous débuts of Pasquariello, this actor was never more than mediocre, and his talents lay largely in the suppleness of his limbs. His type is a variant of Scaramouche, whom—as we have mentioned—he came to replace in the Italian company after the death of Tiberio Fiurelli in 1694.

After the suppression of the Théâtre-Italien (1697), Giuseppe Tortoretti (*Pasquariello*) obtained from the king the privilege of performing the plays of his repertory throughout France, but with the reservation that he was not to bring his company within thirty leagues of Paris.

Thereupon he engaged a company and toured the provinces, but did such poor business that he died in want. Giuseppe Tortoretti had married in Italy Angelica Toscano, who was known at the Théâtre-Italien under the name of Marinetta ; she went with him into the provinces and shared his ill luck.

Pasquariello is dressed more or less like Scaramouche, saving that he does not always wear the cap and cloak ; he replaces cloth by black velvet, and sometimes wears red stockings. His simple and severe appearance permits him to play the same

parts as Scaramouche, and to replace Scapin under the name of Pasquin.

It is chiefly in *L'Avocat Pour et Contre* that Pasquariello has an important part; it is he who develops the plot of the piece; he enters at every instant to terrify Harlequin, who has become a great lord, and his servant Scaramouche. Now he appears as a Captain, to compel Harlequin to marry Columbine whom he has betrayed; at other times he is seen as a dancer, a Moor, a devil and even as a painter, for Harlequin has demanded a painter to paint his portrait.

Pasquariello enters. He has donned a waistcoat splashed and smeared with paint; he walks clumsily by the aid of crutches, and his eyes are almost hidden under a green visor.

"What is this?" demands Harlequin. "A painter of invalids? He is paralysed and he will paint me upside down."

Pasquariello attempts to doff his hat to salute the Marquis Arlecchino, but he trembles to such an extent that, at his movement, the crutches, being unable to support him, one slips forward and the other backward and he tumbles upon Harlequin, who also falls. In the very act of falling this courteous painter greets Harlequin, wishing him good-morning, and announces himself his servant.

Harlequin, bruised and crippled, enlists the assistance of Pierrot to pick up the painter, and then says to him: "Without ceremony, sir, go and do your dying first, and then come back to paint my picture."

But Pasquariello, or rather the painter, evidently adds deafness to his other infirmities; for without being at all disconcerted he sits down, places an enormous pair of spectacles on his nose, and, after having mixed some colours on his palette

with a brush that is something like a broom, he daubs the face of Pierrot, who was standing open-mouthed before him, watching him mix his red and black. Pierrot departs in tears. Harlequin becomes angry. The painter makes no answer; he considers Harlequin, and, brush in one hand and palette in the other, he drags himself on his knees to Harlequin, who, scared, asks him what he is going to do.

"I am going to paint your lordship," replies Pasquariel. But Harlequin draws his attention to the fact that his canvas is on the other side of the stage. The painter gets up, attempts to turn towards his canvas, but misses his step, and falls full length upon the stage. Harlequin exclaims: "Oh, here is a broken painter! I shall have to pay for a painter!" But Pasquariel is up again, and is taking his leave preliminary to departing. He balances himself upon his feet, then lets himself hurtle against Harlequin, who, being pushed thus unexpectedly, falls once more. Pasquariello falls on top of him as heavily as possible. He then gets up and departs, pursued by Harlequin's imprecations.

In another scenario, *La Precaution Inutile*, Pasquariello is a lackey. He has been placed on duty together with Pierrot at Isabella's door, and they have been expressly commanded not to allow any love letters to pass in. A butterfly flutters towards them. Pasquariel lifts up his nose and observes to Pierrot that perhaps this is a love messenger. Pierrot is absolutely of the same opinion. Thereupon a chase is set on foot, their object being to seize the papers which the butterfly no doubt carries. We have bounds and leaps, and we see one climbing upon the shoulders of the other to reach

the butterfly, but the butterfly rises ever higher and higher. Both of them, nose in the air, fling up their hats, and end by colliding with each other so violently that both are knocked over and roll on the ground.

In *Le Grand Sophy*, Pasquariello, the valet of Ottavio, says to Mezzetin :

" Become but a captain of dragoons, and pleasure and good living will follow you everywhere. No troubles, no sorrows, nothing but joy. What happiness ! You receive an order to join the army. Immediately you take the coach, and all along the road you have partridges and quails and ortolans for your everyday food. Just taste me this wine." (*He pretends to uncork a bottle and to pour wine into a glass.* MEZZETIN *opens his mouth to receive the wine.*) " Well, what do you think of it ? That is the least of all the wines that you will drink on the way. Then you arrive in camp. To begin with you are given very handsome apartments on one floor."

MEZZETIN. So much the better, for I do not care about going upstairs, I think it is a bad omen.

PASQUARIELLO. A number of officers will come to visit you. You play, you smoke, you sing, you drink liqueurs.

MEZZETIN. The devil ! That is the life of a prelate ! And people say that there are evils in war !

PASQUARIELLO. Well, well ! It is only people who have never been there who speak ill of it. Meanwhile the enemy advances, and the captain of dragoons is ordered to go and reconnoitre—that is, to ascertain where the enemy is encamped, what movements they are making, and the number of the troops that compose their army. There is nothing easier. First of all you will march in fine order at the head of your company. Oh ! I can see you on horseback, what a heroic air ! What majesty ! Do you dream of it ? Do you shake your ears ?

MEZZETIN. Ay. I know how it hurts me to go on horseback,

and yet I have never mounted anything more than a donkey. It makes my shoulders ache. Couldn't we cut that out?

PASQUARIELLO. Indeed no, it is an honour. You advance thus upon the enemy. As soon as they see you appear, they detach a company of carabineers to come and meet you. When you are within range of one another you begin to exchange salutes in pistol shots, zin! zan! The captain of the carabineers draws his sword, runs upon you and—tac!

MEZZETIN. Woe me!

PASQUARIELLO. Oh! that is nothing, only an arm lopped off.

MEZZETIN. And you call that nothing! I think it is something myself!

PASQUARIELLO. Pooh! pooh! a mere trifle. The action is reported to the court, and you become a colonel in another regiment. The general orders his army to deliver battle, and to come to blows; the enemy are firing like all the devils, zi! zi! pi! pa! bon! ban! tac!

MEZZETIN. Heavens, I am lost! Another tac!

PASQUARIELLO. It is a grenade shot, which carries away one of our colonel's legs. But that is a trifle.

MEZZETIN. Devil take me if I didn't suspect it when I heard that tac of yours!

PASQUARIELLO. What would you? These are the fruits of war. Your wound will be treated. Your name will be published in the gazette, and you will become a brigadier.

MEZZETIN. A still greater charge?

PASQUARIELLO. Faith, I should think so! All the officers will come to compliment you upon your new rank, and they will envy your good fortune. The enemy rallies and returns to the charge. First of all our brigadier runs from side to side, issuing the necessary orders. The fight becomes obstinate, then the enemy is routed, victory is shouted, the fugitives are pursued sword in hand. At that moment a battery of twelve pieces of cannon, which the enemy had mounted on a little prominence, is discharged, bon! don! don! tac! tac!

MEZZETIN. Mercy! Ah! I am dead, there were two tacs!

PASQUARIELLO. You were very unfortunate. What a pity! Our poor brigadier has had his remaining arm and leg carried away by a cannon shot.

MEZZETIN. I am not in the least surprised, tacs have always been fatal to me. (*Kneeling down with his two arms behind him.*) Now here is a pretty man!

PASQUARIELLO. You must be patient, my friend. These are marks of your valour. You will have appeared again in the gazette, and you will be made a general, the highest rank of all.

MEZZETIN. There is one thing I notice: the more my rank increases, the more my limbs diminish.

PASQUARIELLO. From the moment that you are a general you mount on horseback.

MEZZETIN. A moment, please. How am I to mount on horseback if I have neither legs nor arms?

PASQUARIELLO. You are afforded a fresh occasion on which to cover yourself with glory. The enemy is badly placed, you have closed round them, and, after issuing your orders for the fight, you run hither and thither, giving courage to your soldiers.

MEZZETIN. Good! I shall be giving courage to others whilst myself I am dying of fright.

PASQUARIELLO. The battle is over: turn what way you will there is nothing but carnage; grenades, bombs, carcasses, cannon balls, all come hailing down Pif! paf! zin! zan bon! don! don! tac!

MEZZETIN. Ah me! We have come to it again!

PASQUARIELLO. It is a bullet that has carried away the general's head.

MEZZETIN. Trivial, eh?

PASQUARIELLO. Exactly.

MEZZETIN. I shall be happy to know what rank you will give me now.

PASQUARIELLO. Oh, as soon as your wounds are healed, peace will be made, and you will go and serve in Hungary against the Turks.

MEZZETIN. I am to go and serve in Hungary without arms,

legs or head. Oh, go to the devil with your company ! If ever I become a captain of dragoons may all the tacs in the world strike me at once !

In *La Fausse Coquette,* Pasquariello is again a servant, and in the service of I know not what Polish prince, who is none other than Ottavio.

" He comes on with a lighted torch followed by one of his friends who carries a bottle and a glass. And as Pasquariello's entire attention is engaged by the bottle, he thinks only of emptying it, without paying attention to what his master is saying. Hence it follows that he never returns proper answers to the questions of the prince who, wearied by his impertinences, looks at him closely, and, surprising him glass in hand, delivers him a kick in the stomach and goes off. Pasquariello falls backward, turns a somersault without upsetting his glass, gets up, drains it, and goes off saying : *Gran sventura di servire un giovane senza cervello !* (What a misfortune to serve a witless young man !)"

In the Regent's troupe (1716) Giacopo Rauzzini was entrusted with the rôles of Scaramouche. According to the brothers Parfait,

" He was an intruder in the troupe of the Italian comedians. A hundred pistoles presented by him to the man who had been charged by Riccoboni (*Lelio*) to find a good Scaramouche obtained him the position. He had been an usher in Naples before taking to the stage, and he was but a very mediocre comedian. He was addicted to gambling, ostentation and extravagance ; he set up a coach, kept open house, and in con-

sequence made many debts. Riccoboni the elder was obliged to apply to the court for an order to inhibit his comrade's creditors to stop persecuting him, and, being himself an honest man, he compelled Rauzzini to pay three-quarters of his debts. This state of things continued down to the death of this comedian, who was stricken by an apoplexy in the church of Saint-Eustache, where he died on the 24th October 1731. He was buried on the morrow at the expense of the troupe."

In 1711, Cavé, known as *Maillard*, made his début at the fair of Saint-Germain in the rôles of Scaramouche. He toured the provinces but was never seen at the Théâtre-Italien. One day at the fair of Saint-Laurent, Maillard was in the shop of Dubois, the lemonade vendor; his wife, who was playing Columbine, happened to pass by on her way to the theatre, and gave him good-day in a friendly and coquettish manner.

"Do you by chance know that lovely comedienne?" Maillard was asked by one who happened to be in the shop at the same time.

"Eh! Cadedis," he replied, affecting a Gascon accent, "if I know her?

> ". . . Au gré de mes désirs,
> J'ai goûté dans ses bras mille et mille plaisirs."

"Shake hands," said the other, "for I can say the same."

Maillard abandoned his tone of raillery to inform this indiscreet fellow that he was the husband of the calumniated Columbine.

"Faith," replied the other, "I am sorry to have been so frank; but I cannot possible retract a statement of fact."

It was then that Maillard became really angry and demanded

satisfaction. Swords were drawn. Maillard was wounded and disarmed. His adversary himself conducted him to a surgeon in whose care he left him, taking his leave in the terms of the following mocking allusion from La Fontaine upon deceived husbands:

> "Quand on le sait, c'est peu de chose:
> Quand on l'ignore, ce n'est rien."

In 1745 Gandini made his début at the Théâtre-Italien in *La Vengeance de Scaramouche* and was very well received.

Other famous players of the part were Carlo Agati and Bertinelli, who achieved a deal of success in Italy somewhere about 1715.

iii

Pasquino is an intriguing lackey, who talks a deal and lies as much. His reputation is detestable. He is a nincompoop who makes a ruin of everything to which he sets his hands, including his own affairs, for he spends far too much time in chattering with the waiting-women. Nevertheless he is concerned with only one thing in the world—his own interest. Pasquino is no more than a pale shadow of Brighella, or perhaps he is the same type as Pasquariello.

Pasquino (*as a traveller*). Ah, Fortune, Fortune! will you always turn a pirouette at the pasquinades of the unfortunate Pasquino? And will you never steer the wheel of your inconstancy into the rut of my merit? Driven from Rome by kicks, I have trailed my shoes from hostelry to hostelry, having no other payment to offer for my lodging than that of liberally maligning those who give me food. At last I arrive

here without money, with the hunger of a dog, and unable to appease the starving murmurs of my languishing inside.

Oh, sweet Olivetta, my dear mistress, whose pretty and coquettish ways so often contrived that I should find credit in the hostelries, you should have mended my fortunes. But, since all things are mutable, and since your beauty could but grow pale before the inhumanity of innkeepers, I was compelled to leave you. What should you say, O beautiful forsaken one, if you could see your tender Pasquino, his stomach as hollow as his purse, you who found me a hundred times lying gorged with wine upon your door-sill, as upon a feather bed? It was then that in assisting me to rise you were able with such charming discrimination to distinguish between the hiccoughs of my vinous plenitude and the sighs of my burning love. Oh, Kitchen! enchanting and delicious retreat! Thou erstwhile favourable asylum for my appetite, thou, the usual sojourn of my charming Olivetta! Happy the peaceful stewpans that are scoured by her lovely hands! Grills, cauldrons, pots and frying pans, warlike ministers to the jaws, you that are the usual trophies of my lovely mistress. Alas!—for pity's sake revolt against all the roasts and the ragouts of which you are the secondary causes and by a general and harmoniously funereal rattle inform my dear Olivetta that a desperate hunger is about to break the springs of the turnspit of her love!

iv

The costume of CRISPIN, of the French comedy, created by Raymond Poisson in the middle of the seventeenth century, is borrowed from that of Scaramouche, and particularly from that of the Neapolitan Scaramouche, who, in imitation of the Captains, wears a long rapier and displays all the arrogance and cowardice of that character. This type, which is that of a lackey, more or less faithful according to the wages which he earns, a flatterer, a drunkard, a liar and a thief like Brighella,

is none the less an entirely French creation which we owe to Poisson. We mention the character as a transformation of that of Scaramouche, by which it was inspired. Crispin was very quickly admitted to the forain theatres, and was seen in the same pieces as Mezzetin, Harlequin, Polichinelle, Scaramouche, Pantaloon and the other Italian types. Being of a more modern creation, he wears no mask; he is dressed in black, with boots or shoes, ruffle, gloves, a wide leather belt and a rapier.

Poisson was a tall and well-made man. Some say that to the costume of Crispin he added boots to conceal the excessive thinness of his legs, but it is more likely that he appeared thus upon the stage because, in his youth, the streets of Paris, of which not more than one half were paved, compelled footmen and servants to go booted.

XV

COVIELLO

Callot has left us engravings of the principal dancers, buffoons, mimes and masks of the ancient Italian comedy, in his series known as *Les Petits Danseurs*, but whose real title is *I Balli di Sfessania* (*The Dances of Fescennia*). All the world knows that the inhabitants of Fescennia, whose ruins are still to be seen a quarter of a league from Galesa in Piedmont, invented a style of verse which enjoyed a great vogue in Rome, in which satire, allied with a primitive coarseness, called things by their proper names. These verses were laden with raillery, jests and buffooneries; they were accompanied by grotesque dances and improvised scenes, absolutely like the Atellanæ, but of a more trivial humour. In a letter addressed to Augustus, Horace writes:

> *"Fescennina per hunc inventa licentia morem*
> *Versibus alternis, opprobria rustica fudit."*

"The people of Fescennia," says the Chevalier de Jaucourt, "accompanied their fêtes and public rejoicings by pastoral performances in which comedians declaimed an extremely licentious sort of verse, and went through a thousand buffooneries in the same taste. These verses were imported into the theatre, and held the place of regular drama for over a hundred years with the Romans. The biting satire for which they were employed, discredited them still more than

did their primitive coarseness, so that they became really formidable.

"Catullus, seeing that the Fescennian verses were proscribed by the public authorities, and that their coarseness was no longer in the taste of his century, perfected and chastened them in appearance. In their meaning, however, they remained no less obscene, and they became far more dangerous to morals. The frank, rude terms of a soldier are less hurtful to the heart than the fine, ingenious and delicately turned speeches of the man who follows the trade of a gallant."

The Fescennian actors were still called in Rome *Mimi septentrionis*. They were either naked or dressed in very tight garments, their waists girt with a scarf whose ends floated in the wind. They danced, accompanying themselves upon castanets very similar to those that are in use to-day.

It is, then, under this title of *I Balli di Sfessania* that Callot reproduced some fifty actors, dancers and buffoons of the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. In the main he represents actual personages, derived haphazard from the various Italian troupes, such as the *Gelosi*, the *Accesi*, and the *Fedeli*, who visited Florence when Callot was a student there.

These personages may be divided into two classes, rendered very distinct one from the other by the garments worn by each: that of the jugglers and tumblers, who were exclusively dancers or mimes, and that of the buffoons, *zanni* and comedians playing given parts.

The members of the former class wear skull caps like the ancient mimes, or else caps decked with long feathers, the

half mask with a very long bottle nose, without beard, and tight garments, adorned by a line of large buttons; they recall the costumes in fashion for court fools and buffoons of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the main they are merely tumblers, addicted to contortionistic poses and wild dances, equilibrists, sword swallowers and strong men. They are the descendants of the real *funambuli* and *acrobates* of the ancients, and like them they are phallophores.

Thanks to Callot, we find among these the following types that would otherwise be lost to us: Ciurlo in an extravagant posture, inviting Gian-Fritello, who disdains him, to the dance; Ratsa-di-Boio, abandoning himself to a picturesque dance, whilst several kindred fellows, holding hands, form a ring about a Smaraolo-Cornuto, perched upon stilts, beating a drum; Pasquariello Truonno and Meo-Squaquara imitating by their gestures a sort of *cancan*; Esgangarato and Cocodrillo as well as Bello-Sguardo, wearing bracelets and hawk-bells on their arms and legs; Razullo scratching, as his name suggests, his guitar, to the sound of which Cucurucu, in fine spectacles, is striking a modest pose. Cicho-Sgarra threatens Collo-Francisco, who trembles before him; Babeo is seen with his friend Cucuba; Cardoni pursued by Maramao; Grillo, a crippled, misshapen fellow; Cucorongna and Pernovalla, each going through contortions; and lastly Coviello, famous for his grimaces and his confused language.

This personage, according to Salvator Rosa, was one of the seven masks of the ancient Commedia dell' Arte. The description which he affords us proves that already in his day the costume of this buffoon had been transformed, and probably by himself, for we know that, under the mask of Coviello,

Salvator Rosa earned the applause of all Rome in a character of his own creation, *Il Signor Formica*. In Hoffman's tale entitled *Salvator Rosa*, a pleasant fiction is intermingled with the details of historic reality on the subject of the transformations and disguises of Salvator Rosa.

According to Salvator Rosa, Coviello is a native of Calabria; "his wit is sharp and subtle; he is shrewd, adroit, supple and vain. His accent and dress are those of his country—doublet and breeches of black velvet laced with silver. He wears a mask with encarnadined cheeks and black brow and nose."

Apart from the mask there is nothing resembling this description in the personage engraved by Callot, nor in all his collection of dancers in extravagant poses, their tight-fitting and ridiculous garments adorned by a row of enormous buttons running the whole length of the body, their hats heavily plumed, their limbs charged with hawk-bells to render the dance noisy as that of savages, each mask adorned by a nose like an elephant's trunk, some jumping and leaping, some playing the guitar or mandolin, some threatening invisible enemies with their wooden sabres.

"*C'è un Coviello*" (He is a Coviello) is an old Italian saying applicable to a boastful fool. Molière, in his *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, has made of his Coviello a lackey after the fashion of Scapin, who repeats everything said by his master, if not word for word at least idea for idea. According to some Coviello is a nincompoop who affects to be valiant; according to others he is an astute observer. In reality he is a type that has already passed from fashion. In the early years of the nineteenth century he still appeared from time to time in some marionette scenario to discharge a rôle similar to that

of the Captain. His costume also had undergone considerable change: his black hat was adorned by three red feathers, his doublet was slashed with red, his shoes were black, his breeches red and yellow, his cloak red, he wore gloves, cannon boots and the baldric and sword of the Captains. Even his bizarre mask was gone and replaced by a flesh-coloured mask adorned with moustachios.

ii

The dancers in Callot's second class above mentioned consist of those comedians and buffoons who bring to mind Pulcinella by their simple and ample garments—a wide pantaloon and a sort of blouse, gripped at the waist by a girdle—carrying the wooden sabre and wearing the incomparable plumed hat which takes the form of an enormous cap like that of FRITELLINO. Also they have beards and masks.

In this fashion does Callot show us, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Pulciniello talking with Lucretia; Mezzetin playing the guitar to Riciulina (a soubrette of the *Gelosi* troupe); Guatsetto (a lackey in the *Fedeli* troupe) and Mestolino grimacing at each other; Fricasso in rags, seeking sword in hand his adversary whilst taking care to turn his back upon him. Bagattino mocking Spezza-Monti, who is furiously endeavouring to draw a sword which has rusted in its scabbard; Fracasso, sword in hand, and very different from the French Fracasse; Gian-Farina, wielding his bat whilst dancing with Franceschina (the famous Silvia Roncagli); Bernovalla, a dancer and tambourine player; Trastullo making a declaration to Lucia, who is commanding him to kiss her slipper;

Scapino wrangling about a bottle with Zerbino; Franca-Trippa and Fritellino dancing, the first accompanying himself upon his sabre, the second upon a mandolin.

Franca-Trippa, whose real name was Gabriello di Bologna, was engaged in the *Gelosi* troupe in 1576 for the parts of *Zanni*. He went to France in 1577 and played in the scenarii which were the delight of the court of Henri III. at Blois.

The type of Fritellino, or Gian-Fritello, scored in Italy in the sixteenth century a success equal to that enjoyed by Harlequin in the century following.

In 1560, Pietro-Maria Cecchini, known by the name of Fritellino, was playing in the *Accesi* troupe rôles identical with those that were being filled by Harlequin in the company of the *Gelosi*; thus, in the scenarii of *Arlequin Maître d'Amour* and *Arlequin Valet Etourdi*, the character of Harlequin is played by Fritellino.

Towards 1612, Cecchini was summoned to the court of Matthias, Emperor of Germany. He scored there so great a success that the emperor ennobled him. He published in Venice in 1614 a small treatise: *Discorso intorno alle commedie, commedianti e spettatori*, which he dedicated to the Marquis Clemente Sanezio, and issued a second edition in 1616 dedicated to the Cardinal Borghesi.

Some years later, in France, the character of Fritellino, then called Fritelin and Fristelin, was entrusted with the rôles of lackey in the Tabarinic farces.

Fritellino is dressed in ample garments, and wears the extraordinary hat which, in the hands of Tabarin, assumed—as we shall see—a great variety of forms. He wears the brown mask of the Bergamese mimes and the mantle traditional to all

the *Zanni* of the sixteenth century, as well as the wooden sabre and purse, which last, always empty, plays so great a part in his existence.

iii

In 1570 an Italian troupe toured in France and even went to Paris to play farces and comedies half in French and half in Italian, and sometimes partly in Spanish. This was the company of Juan Ganassa. In it were to be seen the Doctor in his black robe, Pantaloon with his red shoes, Harlequin in his rags, and the Captain on his long legs. Pagliaccio played the leading part and TABARINO was the *Zanni*. But this Tabarino was not yet the famous Tabarin who, some fifty years later, with his master Mondor, was to draw such crowds to witness his farces on the Place Dauphine.

The Tabarino of 1570 was probably entrusted to double rôles, such as that of servant with that of father or husband, like many other masks of the Italian comedy.

There existed in the nineteenth century in Bologna a type which, like all the others, entered the realm of marionettes, representing the old man under the name of Tabarino or *Ser Tabarin*. He was nearly always a retired and ignorant merchant, who began all his sentences in Italian but, for want of practice in this language, invariably concluded them in the Bolognese dialect. Usually he was the father of Columbine, and allied with the Doctor. He is the Bolognese Cassandre or Pantaloon. He wears a powdered bag wig; his coat, waistcoat and breeches are snuff-coloured, his stockings red, coming above the knee and over the breeches; he is shod in buckled

shoes and crowned by a round hat. He is always an old man of sixty.

The most famous of the Tabarins, the associate of the Italian Mondor, who from 1618 to 1630 attracted all Paris was, according to some, of Italian origin and born in Milan, whilst according to others he proceeded from Lorraine. His real name, however, has remained unknown, eclipsed by the glory of his patronymic. Was it by chance that he assumed that of Tabarino, as he might have assumed that of Burattino or Cavicchio—two other types greatly in vogue in the sixteenth century? Or did he deliberately choose a name that was already known throughout France from a member of Juan Ganassa's company who had toured there under it?

Another itinerant troupe under the name of the *Comédiens de Tabarin*, and managed by a certain Tabarini, also toured part of France and of Germany in 1659, and ended by establishing itself at Vienna.

Tabarin, whose name is derived from *tabaro* (a mantle or a tabard), went, as we have said, to Paris in 1618, and became associated with the charlatan Mondor, who, after the fashion of all charlatans of the sixteenth century, set up his stage under the open skies. Upon this farces were played with the object of attracting the crowd; that object achieved, the merchandise to be sold was put forward with quips and witticisms.

It was in this fashion that the Italian Cabotino (the probable source of the word *cabotin*, meaning an itinerant actor) acquired so great a reputation in the sixteenth century as a nomadic operator. He played farce from a scenario, sold his drugs during the interludes, and drew teeth at the end of the performance, all to the accompaniment of flutes and violins.

The number of these charlatan directors of theatres is considerable; the most famous were Scarniccia in the eighteenth century, in Italy, Armando Niasi, on the Place du Châtelet, in Paris, and Mondor who came in 1618 to replace, on the Place Dauphine, Jacques May and Dulignac, whose improvisatory wit had been amusing the gay people of Paris ever since 1598.

Tabarin reached the zenith of his glory in 1622. The Place Dauphine, the scene of his exploits, became too small to contain the spectators who flocked thither, far less for the purpose of buying his unguents than to procure a preservative against melancholy.

"The Pont Neuf in the seventeenth century," writes M. Paul de Saint-Victor, "was the caravanserai of Paris. There you would find encamped beggars, gypsies and comedians; the seven deadly sins kept open fair there; you would behold swarms of those eccentric figures of which the satires and prints of the times have left us such lively portraits, raffinés twirling their moustachios, courtesans in chairs, quacks upon their mules. It was there that you would meet the muddy poet with his owlish eyes and his beard like an artichoke leaf.

"What a pantomime in the manner of Callot! Here two duellists are engaged upon the pavement, there a tooth extractor gropes with his butcher's forceps in the jaw of a screaming peasant, yonder a hawker of hunting dogs beats his pack, further on a pickpocket appropriates the purse of a passer-by, and beggars, dragging their crutches along the unpaved ground, cling to the doors of heavy coaches and to the poles of chairs.

"But the king of this new Cour des Miracles was Tabarin,

the servant of the charlatan Mondor. Their glorious stage was erected on the Place Dauphine, and for more than ten years the people of Paris stood ranged about it, a thousand mouths gaping to consume the nostrums of the empiric and the jests of the buffoon. It had an attendance, a vogue, a success of which some idea may be gathered from the jeremiad which a pamphleteer puts into the mouths of the women of the Rue Dauphine, furious to see their husbands waste their time upon this comedian. 'My husband does not budge from Tabarin. I spend my days without seeing him; first to this beautiful farce; then to play with other debauched fellows like himself; after playing they must go to the tavern. All the evil proceeds from that dog Tabarin. And whence do you suppose came last year's illness but from this fine buffoon? Such was the heat on the Place Dauphine that the air was corrupted by it. And that was the reason why the king remained out of Paris for so long, and why we suffered so much poverty.'"

In 1625 Tabarin went to tour the provinces, and retired in 1630, peacefully to enjoy the fortune which he had amassed. He bought a feudal estate near Paris, and died there a very short time after having acquired it. There are two versions of the manner of his death: one has it that he succumbed in a drinking bout, the result of a tavern wager; the other that he was killed whilst hunting. The fact is reported in a book entitled *Parlement nouveau, ou centurie interlinaire de devis facétieusement sérieux et sérieusement facétieux*, by Daniel Martin, 1637, from which the following is an interesting passage on the subject:—

"Could you tell me the reason why the name of charlatan

is given to all vendors of theriacs, distillers, tooth-drawers, vendors of powdered serpents, of unguents and balsams in the market places, of comedians on a table, bench or scaffold.

"Indeed, sirs, this word charlatan means a man who by fine words sells bad merchandise; a cajoler such as was seen in Paris in the year 1623, in a man named Tabarin and an Italian named Mondor, who, having set up a scaffold in l'Isle du Palais, assembled the people by the music of their violins and the farces which they played, whereafter they set about praising their drugs, and said so much good of them that the silly and stupid folk, believing them capable of curing all ills, would strive with one another as to who should be the first to throw his money knotted in the corner of a handkerchief or in a glove on to the scaffold so as to obtain a little box of unguent wrapped in a printed bill, setting forth the virtues of it and the manner of using it.

"I have been told that this buffoon became in a few years so rich with the money of fools that he bought a lordship near Paris, which, however, he did not very long enjoy.

"Why so?

"Because his neighbours, who were gentlemen of good and ancient houses, being unable to endure for their companion a pantaloon, a fool who with his hat metamorphosed into a thousand shapes had made so many others laugh, killed him one day while hunting, it is said.

"His master had not sufficiently impressed upon him a proverb of his native land: '*A cader va chi troppo sale.*'"

"Tabarin had a tragic end," says M. de Saint-Victor. "His trestles had enriched him; the jests which throughout

ten years he had flung to the crowd had come back to him in a shower of doubloons. Pride tempted him. He purchased a feudal estate and set up there as a lord. The gentlefolk thereabouts, indignant of such a neighbour, killed the buffoon one day at the hunt, as though he had been a hare. *Poor Yorick!*"

Mondor and Tabarin had several competitors, amongst whom were the Sieur Hieronimo and his comedian *Galinette la Galina*; and Desiderio de Combes and his servant *Grattelard*, who set up their theatre at the entrance to the Pont Neuf. Desiderio was ugly and misshapen, and his jests were ponderous.

"As for Combes, he is coarse and rustic, he cannot read or write or speak, and the little audience accorded him accounts him what he is, an ignorant charlatan, and the most brazen liar that ever mounted a bench."

The populace admired Tabarin, who possessed in so high a degree the genius of farce, whilst people of condition were no less amused by him. It is conceived that some habitués of his entertainment, observing the attention which he excited, had the idea to collect his farces and impromptu jests. But they did not disclose themselves.

One only, a certain Guillaume, has issued from obscurity.

"There are five or six rascals" (it is Hortensius who speaks, in the *Vraye histoire comique de Francion*, 1668) "who earn their living by writing romances; and there was even a college scout, who was in the service of the Jesuits after me, who amused himself by spoiling paper. His first attempt was a *Collection of Tabarinic Farces* . . . a book so successful that

twenty thousand copies were sold, whilst it is impossible to sell six hundred of a worthy work. . . . The name of this scout was Guillaume. . . . He contrived to get some other works printed. But all his books are fit for nothing but to wrap up pounds of butter."

So that *The Complete Works of Tabarin* did not contain a single line written by Tabarin or by Mondor, whose entire repertory was improvised; nevertheless, they were collected from the inspirations of Tabarin.

Neither the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne nor Gaultier-Garguille assisted by Gros-Guillaume and Dame Perrine, who played the most famous farces that one could desire, were able, for the five sous which they charged each spectator, to afford their audiences the amusement and laughter afforded by Tabarin alone, gratis and with only his hat. For be it noted that his was a master hat which assumed all conceivable shapes; it was a veritable first matter, *indifferens ad omnes formas*. It was the chief property of an entire shop, the very foundation stone of his theatre.

"This venerable and wonderful grey felt came to Tabarin in direct succession from Saturn. This god was the first to wear it, not as wide as it is now, but in a lengthened shape. He wore it when he came to Italy, fleeing before the choler of Jupiter, and gave it then its pointed shape that he might disguise himself. Until then there had been no hats but round ones like that of Mercury. It was from that time forward that pointed hats were worn in the Spanish fashion. Saturn presented it to *Tabaron*, an ancestor of Tabarin's, who until then had gone

bareheaded. He was glad to find this expedient to protect him from the heat of the sun; it was from this felt hat the invention of the parasol was derived. This hat was handed down from father to son with respect and reverence like a holy reliquary, in memory of Saturn who wore it on weekdays. But some member or other of the Tabarinian race, through negligence or absent-mindedness, permitted it to be lost. It was found and carried to Jupiter, who, unable to conceive of a better present for his Mercury, gave it to him as becoming the only god who wore a hat. Mercury, vain and foolish, had its shape altered, transformed it into a pyramid and attached wings to it. Unfortunately, however, on the first occasion that he wore it, upon taking flight from heaven, the wind got inside it and it was lost. It is said that he would never afterwards wear a high-crowned hat. Janus, who, we are told, was living at that time, was so glad to find it that he put it on, but, having two faces and an enormous head, he so deformed it that it became then as wide as it is now on the head of Tabarin. Janus concealed it under Mount Aventine. Romulus discovered it in the course of building Rome, and it was long preserved at the Capitol. It never issued thence but to figure in the triumphs of the emperors, when they entered Rome laden with spoils and trophies. The high priests were charged with the care of this precious hat, but a member of the Tabarinic race secretly abstracted it, and it was transmitted again from male to male through the Tabarin family. At the time of the expedition of François I. into Italy, the grandfather of the grandfather of Tabarin gave it to a French soldier who was returning home. Desiring to buy a drug which was a sure cure for an ill with which he has afflicted, and having nothing with

which to pay for it but this hat, the soldier exchanged it for a medicine to an apothecary of the Place Maubert, who made use of it for filtering honey.

"Tabarin, upon his arrival in Paris, recognised this hat which had been held in such high esteem by his family. Indignant to discover the use that was being made of the headgear of Saturn, he repurchased it, and if he is the last to own it he can boast that he is the first to have invented how to give it new shapes. With this lunatic and fantastic hat he can represent all manner of hats, and present himself to the eyes of the admiring crowd now as a soldier, now as a courtier, now as a coal-heaver, now as a Dutchman, now as a bear-leader, now as a slinger, now as a servant lately from the wars, etc.

"In brief, Tabarin's hat, assisted by him who bore it, has caused more people to laugh in one day than ever the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne were able to do with their comedies, tragi-comedies and pastorals."

The farces of Tabarin are the source of all the trestle repertories of yesterday.

"It is rare to find a pearl amongst these" (says M. Paul de Saint-Victor), "but on the other hand there is no lack of salt. One is overcome with surprise when prowling through this rubbish-heap to come suddenly nose to nose with Molière or La Fontaine. Here a scene of Poquelin, there an apologue from the Bonhomme have been taken from the farces of Tabarin as a pearl is taken from the oyster. The sack in which Scapin encloses Géronte plays its part in three or four of the farces of the booth on the Pont Neuf."

Tabarin proposes to his master a burlesque question; his master proceeds to resolve it by a doctoral explanation which Tabarin interrupts with his foolery.

Question: How to make fifty pairs of shoes in half-an-hour

TABARIN. It is a great secret. I do not think there is any man in the world who has ever put this invention into practice.

THE MASTER. In truth, Tabarin, the solution of this secret must be very ardently sought. It is one of the most clever inventions seen for a very long time. As for me I am constrained to acknowledge my ignorance save that to arrive at this end I should take a hundred cobblers and I should entrust to each the making of one shoe; then I think that in a very short while I should arrive at what is desired.

TABARIN. That is not what I mean. I mean one man who alone, in less than half-an-hour, should make fifty pairs of shoes. There is nothing easier. You will yourself confess when you shall have learned the secret that it is one of the finest conceivable; cobblers should be able to extract great profit from it. To begin with you must take fifty pairs of new boots (if you desire that your shoes shall be new), and cut them all equally across along the line of the ankle; by this means, instead of fifty pairs of boots which we had before you will find in less than half-an-hour fifty pairs of shoes ready made. Is it not a fine invention?

Who are those who desire to be one-eyed?

TABARIN. My master, the other day I heard a certain fellow say that he would give a hundred crowns to be one-eyed. Who are those that may be considered entitled to express such a wish?

THE MASTER. A man must be quite beside himself to have so great a cupidity in his soul. Sight is one of the first organs of the body, and the most delicate part of it, being of an incredible and admirable construction, in which the Author of

the Universe has enclosed all that is rarest and most excellent in this world ; for whether we consider the two pairs of nerves which have their sources in the brain, and by which sight is conducted, one of them being stronger to supply movement, the other more delicate to supply sight ; or whether we consider the crystalline humour that is in the centre of the eye, and its enveloping tunic which resembles a spider's web, or the other two humours that surround it and in which the eye seems to swim ; if afterwards we come to the consideration and contemplation of the admirable retina and the films which surround the whole body of the eye, the muscles which raise and lower the eyelids, and all the artifice employed by Nature in this admirable construction, we shall conclude that a man is highly imprudent to desire the inestimable loss of the finest part of him.

TABARIN. The men who desire to be one-eyed are the blind. If you do not believe me go to the monastery of the Quinze-Vingts, and I can assure you that you will not find there a single one who would not be delighted to *see* you hanged.

Who are those who deride doctors and apothecaries ?

TABARIN. In your opinion, who are those who deride doctors and apothecaries ?

THE MASTER. Some very ill-advised people who, believing that they will never need their services, deride their recipes ; they are people of nothing, ignorant of the fact that medicine is an entirely celestial and divine art, which restores and reintegrates Nature in her perfection and her apogee. Medicine is the science of natural sciences, and ignorant are those who despise it.

Altissimus de coelo creavit medicinam, et vir prudens non abhorrebit eam.

TABARIN. I said the same thing lately to a tailor who was making me a pair of breeches : *Homerus et vir prudens non abhorrebet eam.*

THE MASTER. For my part I think that those who malign

doctors are the ignorant, and such folk as think never to need their assistance.

TABARIN. You are wrong, for those who mock them are those who most desire their aid, the people who are ill.

THE MASTER. The people who are ill, Tabarin! How can it happen that a patient should mock a doctor, since he is so sorely in need of one?

TABARIN. Is it not a piece of mockery to put out your tongue half-a-foot to him who comes to visit you?

THE MASTER. Indeed to put out the tongue is a sign of derision.

TABARIN. Very well, when a doctor goes to see a patient to ascertain his ailment, the sick man always puts out his tongue at him. That is pure mockery.

Dialogue between Mondor and Tabarin

TABARIN. My master, let us consider things for once: it is high time that I should become the master. I have been the servant far too long.

THE MASTER. Get along, you rascal, you gallows bird! Do you want to become the master, scullion that you are? You want to give me orders, do you? And what then am I to become? Your servant? Really, it would be a fine sight!

TABARIN. Yes, indeed, I should be a fine sight. Am I not as much a man as you, and as great a master?

THE MASTER? What is one to say to a man who is persuaded of something, and who gets some insolent notion into his mind? Come here, rogue; who keeps you? who nourishes you? who supplies you with all your necessaries?

TABARIN. It was but wanting that you should boast of feeding me! A fine master you! When I came to see you, you made an agreement with me, and you promised to dress me and to nourish me. The devil take me if you've observed the hundredth part of that! Every time that I have risen I have been compelled to dress myself. When it was necessary to dine, did you feed me? I have been constrained myself to go to the trouble of putting my fingers in the dish and carrying

them to my mouth. I have endured far too much at your hands, but henceforward I shall teach you what it means to be master.

THE MASTER. Is your brain so troubled and your judgment so distorted that you do not know that I am your master ?

TABARIN. Not at all, I maintain that I am as great a master as you. Tell me, pray, how you can distinguish between master and servant ?

THE MASTER. It is easy to recognise the one from the other, whether at rising or going to bed or even in the street : the master always goes ahead.

TABARIN. I have got you. Now listen. You say that the master is always to be recognised because he walks ahead ; tell me now, every time you go to sup in town and that you return after dark by torchlight, which of us two walks ahead ?

THE MASTER. It is you, Tabarin, since bearing the torch it is your duty to light my way.

TABARIN. It follows then that I am the master, for I walk ahead. Oh ! the fine lackey that follows me then !

The most daring animal

TABARIN. Since you have some slight knowledge of the nature of animals, will you kindly tell me which is the most daring animal, and which the most generous ?

THE MASTER. That is a matter beyond all doubt, Tabarin ; it is the lion ; for just as he is the most furious of all so is he the most daring. The daring and generosity of anything is to be recognised by the heights of the enterprises which it undertakes. Now among all species of animals, of which the number is almost infinite, there is none that shows so great generosity and daring as the lion. He is equipped with a male courage which distinguishes all his actions. There is no other beast, however furious it may be, that dares to stand before his face. In short, to be brief, he is the most daring of all animals.

TABARIN. You are wrong, my master. I do not go so far as to say that you are lying, but it really amounts to no less.

The most daring animal on earth is the miller's donkey, my master, because every day of his life he is amid robbers and knows no fear.

A collection attributed to Tabarin is entitled: "Jardin, récueil, trésor, *abrégé de secrets, jeux, facéties, gausseries, passe-tems*, compozéz, fabriquéz, experimentéz, et mis en lumière par votre serviteur Tabarin de *Valburlesque*, à plaisirs et contentements des esprits curieux."

Here are some brief extracts from it:

To contrive that all those who are at a ball or other assembly shall sneeze at once

Take spurge, pirètre and white hellebore, in equal quantities of each. Reduce the whole to finest powder and blow it through a quill about the room where people are assembled and watch the result.

To contrive that meat brought to table shall seem full of worms

Take a lute cord, cut it into little pieces and put these upon the meat while it is still hot, and the heat will set these pieces jumping and moving as if they were worms.

This is followed by several jests and secrets to amuse the company, such as:

"Recipe to prevent a pot from boiling."

"How to make an egg run through the room without anyone touching it."

"How to kill and pluck a bird all in one stroke."

"How to cut a string into several pieces and immediately to make it whole again."

"Admirable secret for cutting an apple in four, eight or more pieces without damaging the skin."

" How to contrive that he or she whom you appoint in drying the face with a cloth shall become black. A very amusing secret," etc., etc.

Even a prophetic almanac for 1623 appeared under the name of Tabarin with admirable predictions for every month of the year. It is a collection of sentences and predictions after the manner of *La Palisse*.

" First of all should no timber or faggots arrive in port we shall be in danger of paying high prices for fuel, etc. The month of March will commence immediately after the last day of February, and the weather will be very variable. The month of April will follow after, etc. In the month of June the grass will be cut. In July there will be a great war between dogs and hares. Bulls will be twice as big as sheep and donkeys will be as stupid as usual, whilst diminishing nothing in the length of their ears. In the month of October the Normans will be busy in their orchards. The month of December will be the last month of the year. In this year no rustics will be ennobled," etc., etc.

All such prognostications, like many others of Tabarin, come in direct line from Rabelais, who himself imitated in his *Pantagrueline prognostication* the collection of *facéties* of Henri Bebelius.

" This year the blind will see very little, the deaf will hear very badly and the dumb will not speak at all. Many sheep, bulls, pigs, geese, pullets and ducks will die. Fleas will mostly be black. There will be horrible sedition between dogs and hares, between cats and rats, between moles and eggs. In all this year there will be but one moon, and it will not be a new one. In winter, according to my little judgment, those who sell their furs to buy wood will not be wise. Should it rain do not

be melancholy, for there will be the less dust on the roads. Keep yourselves warm, avoid catarrhs and drink the best."

The costume of Tabarin was composed of his mirific hat, of a felt which was red rather than grey, of a short cloak in old green serge, and jacket and trousers of linen.

iv

Burattino is a famous mask of the *Gelosi* troupe. It was somewhere about 1580 that this personage appeared in Florence and scored so great a success that very soon he passed into the marionette theatres, and his name became the denomination of all marionettes, *Fantoccini*, *Puppi*, *Pupazzi* and *Bamboccie*. In 1628 a piece was even written about this personage by Francesco Gattici, entitled *Le Disgrazie di Burattino* (*The Misfortunes of Burattino*).

In the scenarii of Flaminio Scala, Burattino is a comical character, addicted to tears, a glutton, a coward and always a dupe. He is a servant, sometimes of Captain Spavento, sometimes of Isabella and sometimes of Pantaloon. In fairy plays he intrudes upon the action to deliver his jests, which have absolutely no connection with the plot. He is a sort of ancient Stenterello. In *L'Innocente Persiana*, Burattino is the servant of the Prince of Egypt, and his rôle consists of losing and finding his master. In some plays he is a courier bearing letters, booted, wearing a wide felt hat, and carrying a whip; he loses his letters, or permits them to be stolen from him, which disheartens him, and, crossing his legs, he refuses thereafter to be entrusted with any commission.

At other times he is a gardener, the father of Olivetta, an indolent girl, little given to work. He reproaches her with being unable to do anything. "How," he cries, "at your age and as big as you are, and, my faith, fit to be married, you still do not know how to use a mattock or how to plant a cabbage!" Thereupon he submits her to a course of burlesque horticulture, naming to her one after another the garden implements, and telling her how to use them.

Very often he is an innkeeper, and married to Franceschina, who leads him by the nose. The Captain, having dined at his inn, departs after having paid. Burattino is so surprised that he takes up a spade, shoulders it, and thus escorts the Captain home to do him honour; but he is careful to take with him Grillo, the pot-boy, so that he shall not be compelled to return alone. When he gets back he perceives Pantaloon whispering with his servant Pedrolino; the latter, perceiving Burattino, with whose wife he is in love, raises his voice and reproaches Pantaloon with attempting to betray the wife of that poor fellow Burattino. Pantaloon beats his servant for having disclosed his intentions before the husband and departs. Burattino comforts Pedrolino who has suffered for the sake of the honour of his friend the innkeeper; he takes him inside, feeds him, and then, with the greatest confidence, entrusts him with the vigilance of his wife during his absence.

No sooner has our innkeeper departed than Madame Franceschina makes unmistakable advances to Pedrolino. It is Pantaloon who seeks to convince Burattino of the treachery of his friend and of his wife. Furious, the innkeeper demands an explanation of Franceschina, who assures him mockingly that he is mistaken. He believes her and returns to his affairs,

but Pantaloon, grown jealous on his own account, returns to the assault, and compels the husband to surprise the two lovers. Burattino seeks various ways of vengeance; he decides for poison and spends half the piece seeking a suitable one; being unable to find any, he decides to call the watch, and it is before the justice that he demands explanations of his wife and Pedrolino. The result is that Burattino is persuaded that he misunderstood what he heard and what he saw, which was no more than a pleasantry. He believes and begs forgiveness of his wife, whom he continues to account virtuous.

The actor who played the rôle of Burattino in the *Gelosi* troupe must very long have been absent from it, for he is not found to be included in a whole series of scenarii which must cover a space of some six to eight years.

V

Cavicchio was in the *Gelosi* troupe in the sixteenth century, a sort of imbecile and rustic servant. His rôles are short, and they consist mainly in his coming on to sing and to relate some story after the fashion of the peasants.

In *Gli Avvenimenti Comici*, Cavicchio is carrying soup to the harvesters when he pauses before Mezzetin and Harlequin, who, dressed as labourers, are making love to Lisetta, a young shepherdess. He mocks them, and from injurious expressions they come to blows. But the shepherdess and her friends, who arrive at the noise, separate the brawlers, and compel them to make friends. Lisetta, desiring to cement the harmony between Mezzetin and Harlequin, exacts from them a promise that, for love of her, they will eat Cavicchio's soup in the posi-

tion that she shall indicate. Lisetta then places them back to back and ties their arms. She then places the bowl on the ground, bidding them eat, and departs, enjoining Cavicchio to give them drink after they have finished the soup. Mezzetin and Harlequin then attempt to pick up the soup, but each of them, every time that he stoops, lifts his companion upon his shoulders, which is a source of jests for Cavicchio, who looks on with bursts of laughter. Harlequin ends by picking up the bowl and runs off eating, carrying Mezzetin on his back.

In the third act it is night; Cavicchio is in his hut with his children who are weaving baskets whilst he sings to the accompaniment of a hornpipe, so as to maintain the family gaiety. Hearing a noise without, he takes up a lamp and goes outside, to find himself face to face with a military patrol. He cries out and calls his wife to his aid, but the captain having reassured him, Cavicchio takes up his hornpipe and sets them all dancing, his wife, his children, the soldiers and even the captain.

vi

Ficcheto is a simpleton who wearies his master, the innkeeper, and his customers by gross proverbial comparisons and ponderous quotations. To listen to him you would suppose that he had been in the Doctor's service, and that he had profited by his lessons. Extremely timid, he goes greatly in fear of thieves, and so as to deceive them he never sleeps in the same part of the house on two consecutive occasions; every evening he is engaged in removing his bed. His master, intrigued by these nightly removals, inquires the reason.

"It is on account of thieves," replied Ficcheto. "They will be finely trapped——"

"I hope so indeed," replies his master, a man of sense.

"I say that they will be finely trapped. A rolling carcass gathers no flies, as my father was wont to say. . . . And then again I like to sleep as far from you as possible, for, as the proverb has it: Who lies down with dogs gets up with fleas, and then——"

"That will do!" says his master, pushing him rudely aside. "Sleep where you will." And thereupon Ficcheto begins once more to transport his mattress.

Among the less known Italian buffoons may be cited Gian Manente and Martino d'Amelia.

In *La Calandra* of the Cardinal of Bibbiena, the servant Fessenio compares Calandro, the ridiculous and deceived husband, to these two buffoons. "The thing that above all others makes me laugh at the expense of Calandro," he says, "is that he believes himself to be so beautiful and lovable that all the women that see him are immediately enamoured of him, as if the world did not possess such another model of perfection. In short, as a popular proverb runs, if he ate hay he would be a bull; in his own way he is almost as good as Martino d'Amelia or Giovanni Manente."

"He is more simple than Calandrino," is a proverb based upon the two models of Boccaccio in which the simplicity of the painter Calandrino impinges upon imbecility. *Far Calandrino qualcheduno* means to make a fool of someone. Bibbiena gives this popular name to the old man of his comedy *La Calandra*.

Cortavoce, also called *Courtavoz*, was one of the first Italian mimes to go to France in 1540. His costume with its grey

hood and his long cardboard nose earned him the surname of *the pilgrim*.

Rabelais, describing in his *Sciomachie* (1569) the fêtes held in Rome on the occasion of the birth of a dauphin of France, speaks of " Bergamese mimes and other *matachins*, who came to perform their jests and somersaults " before the court of Rome. Among others he cites Il Moretto, the archbuffoon of Italy.

Il Moretto is also cited several times by Ludovico Domenichi in his collection of *Facétie*, 1565, as a famous utterer of witticisms and a master of his art.

XVI

TARTAGLIA

Il Tartaglia (the stutterer) is a mask of Neapolitan origin. Sometimes he is a gossiping servant who, unable to complete the articulation of his words so as to convey his ideas, flies into perpetual rages with himself and with others. Nevertheless he is fat. Enormous spectacles conceal three-quarters of his countenance, to suggest that he is short-sighted, and that he has no desire to be surprised by danger ; for however ready he may boast himself to brave anything, from an elephant downwards, he will usually conceal himself behind a hayrick if he hears a cock crow.

The type is one that was but little seen out of Italy. He filled utility rôles and had never more than one scene in a scenario. He would play moreover the parts of notary, of constable, of advocate, of judge, and sometimes of apothecary ; but he was invariably a ridiculous and ridiculed personage.

Favart writes in 1761 :

" The farce *I Tre Gobbi* (" The Three Hunchbacks "), translated into French by Lelio Riccoboni, is being repeated at the Théâtre ; this farce develops badly ; but if it succeeds, that at least will be a good development. I fear in this *facétie*, the character of Tartaglia. One of the three hunchbacks is a stammerer who always halts upon indecent syllables. That is

to venture a great deal in a nation whose ears are as chaste as their morals are corrupt." [1]

[1] In the *Collier de Perles*, performed in 1672, Harlequin, who plays the part of a certain Marchese di Sbrofadel, having swallowed a medicine, imagines himself at the point of death. He summons a notary to make his will. The Doctor goes out and returns with Tartaglia, who plays the notary.

TARTAGLIA. Ser . . . ser . . . servant illustri . . . tri . . . tri . . . trious.

HARLEQUIN. This notary is from Tripoli.

TARTAGLIA (*sits down, draws pen and paper and begins to write*). L'an . . . an . . . an . . . an . . .

HARLEQUIN. Que l'on mène cet âne à l'écurie ! . . .

TARTAGLIA. *I . . . i . . . i . . . io son . . . son . . . sono presto.*

HARLEQUIN. *Va, bene !* I leave this house to the Doctor.

THE DOCTOR. But the house is mine !

HARLEQUIN. I know, that is why I am leaving it to you : if it were not yours I should not leave it to you. I leave my cabinet to my cousin.

TARTAGLIA (*writing*). My ca . . . ca . . . ca . . .

HARLEQUIN. Faites vite retirer ce notaire, il va salir tous les meubles.

TARTAGLIA. . . . binet ! à mon cou . . . cou . . .

HARLEQUIN. I leave sixty-five acres of broadcloth to dress my family in mourning.

THE DOCTOR. You are making a mistake. Cloth is not measured by the acre.

HARLEQUIN. It seems to me that a man may measure his own property as best he pleases.

TARTAGLIA. Pou . . . pou . . . pou . . . pour habiller ma famille en feuille.

HARLEQUIN. Je laisse à *Lallemand*, mon valet de chambre. . . .

TARTAGLIA. Un lavement à mon valet de chambre.

HARLEQUIN. Lallemand ! et non lavement.

TARTAGLIA (*writing always under the dictation of* HARLEQUIN). *Si si . . . si . . . si . . . signor*, il y a bien lavement . . . ent . . . ent . . . ent.

HARLEQUIN. Je laisse toutes mes vielles nippes à la fripière, ma voisine.

TARTAGLIA (*repeating*). Tou . . . tou . . . toutes mes vieilles tri . . . tri . . . tripes, à la tri . . . tri . . . tripière, ma voisine.

TARTAGLIA

Tartaglia's characteristic costume has always presented a great deal of analogy with that of the *Zanni*. Created, it is said, by Beltrani da Verona in 1630, an epoch in which lackeys such as Scapino and Mezzetino began to discard the mask, Tartaglia assumed as his characteristic device no more than the enormous blue spectacles, without which he cannot play. His face is beardless, his head bald and covered by a round grey hat; he wears an enormous linen collar; his cloak, coat and pantaloon are green, striped transversely with yellow; his stockings are white and his shoes are of black or brown leather. Such at first was Tartaglia.

But like all the others he underwent modifications suggested by changing fashions. In 1750, Fiorilli, a very talented Neapolitan actor, a member of Sacchi's troupe, played this type in short breeches and cap; by giving the garments of Tartaglia the form proper to Scapin he eliminated the yellow stripes, and embroidered his green livery with silver frogs.

In the nineteenth century in Naples this personage, whose character is to be nothing in particular so that it may be anything he chooses according to the actor undertaking it, wore the white wig, the three-cornered hat and the green coat in the

HARLEQUIN. *Ohimé!* ce notaire-là n'en peut plus; il faudrait lui donner une médecine pour lui faire évacuer les paroles . . . ! Je laisse vingt écus à mon cuisinier, à condition qu'il dépendra de mon frère cadet.

TARTAGLIA. Qu'il pend . . . pendra mon frère cadet.

HARLEQUIN. Enfin, je laisse au notaire ci-présent, une langue de porc pour mettre à la place de la sienne.

TARTAGLIA. Po . . . po . . . po . . . porc toi-même!

Harlequin gives him a kick which sends him flying, together with his pens, paper, portfolio and ink-horns. Tartaglia gets up, his face covered with ink, and goes off in such a rage that he is unable to articulate intelligible sounds.

Louis XV. fashion; he was the modern Tartaglia, stammering the emphatic dialect of Naples. He delivers himself of the most outspoken and buffoon sayings, with a nonchalance and calm that are imperturbable. It is also a very common thing for the actor who plays Tartaglia to go and spend a night, or perhaps four or five days, in prison. It is a state of things accepted by the actors and the public, and no one troubles about it.

At every undesirable word he stops as if to seek the proper one, and when he has found it he falls upon it heavily, as it were. It is difficult to give a specimen of the excessively free subjects which lead to his arrest. There was one which assumed the importance of a political fact. In the piece in which it was delivered Tartaglia was returning from Spain, and attempted to inform the audience that the queen had just opened the Cortes, being attended by the leaders of all political opinions. The manner in which he garbled the word *Cortes* and several others remained stamped upon the memory of those present, and the jest created some sensation, seeing that the Queen of Spain was then the beautiful Christina, sister to the King of Naples. Tartaglia was sent to prison for a week, and deprived of his favourite spectacles for a month. The latter was the most cruel punishment possible to inflict upon the actor and the public; for without his enormous spectacles Tartaglia is paralysed.

Tartaglia is not always a fat fellow. Sometimes he is so dry, so long and so lean, and adorned with so prominent a nose, that he resembles a walking-stick. He then enjoys a singular prerogative: he is a *jettatore*, he has the evil eye, or rather he has two evil eyes, for he can see nothing behind his great spectacles.

TARTAGLIA

"Tartaglia," says M. Paul de Musset, "is a Neapolitan, enjoying as great a favour as Pancrace. He represents the southerner worn out by the climate, suffering from chronic ophthalmia, and in a condition bordering upon cretinism. His hollow cheeks, his long nose surmounted by enormous blue spectacles, his sickly air and his vice of pronunciation make up the particular signs of a *jettatore* whom it is dangerous to encounter."

In the comedy *Il Re Cervo* of Carlo Gozzi, Tartaglia, his stammering and stupidity notwithstanding, is the prime minister of the kingdom of Serendippe. He desires to marry his daughter to the king, his master. The king, however, loves another, the beautiful Angela. He marries her and becomes jealous. To satisfy his desire to test the sentiments of his wife, the magician Durandarto gives him a formula by means of which his soul can introduce itself into any dead body that he desires to resurrect.

The imprudent monarch confides this important secret to Tartaglia, who is not only furious at the marriage of the king, but further has permitted himself to fall in love with the queen. We behold the injudicious king and his perfidious minister in a forest. A hunted stag falls dead at their feet. Tartaglia persuades his master to put his magic formula to the test upon this animal. The formula is terribly efficacious, for, simultaneously with the passage of the soul of the king into the body of the stag, the body of the king falls dead. So far the evil is of little account, for the king, who has become a stag, may return his soul into his discarded inanimate body. But Tartaglia has been made aware of the formula. He makes use of it immediately to cause his unworthy soul to pass into the body

of the king, and, whilst the latter bounds away through the forest, Tartaglia returns to the palace and orders the massacre of all stags, young and old, in the kingdom of Serendippe.

The scene in which Angela beholds the return of her husband, now stammering and unbearable in his behaviour, is extremely amusing. She drives him from her chamber, and finds herself at the door face to face with a poor beggar whom, by force of instinct, she immediately begins to love. This mendicant, of course, is none other than her real husband. The king had found in the forest a poor devil dead of cold, and he had taken possession of his body, thinking it but little suitable to reappear before his better half in the shape of a stag.

Explanations follow, and Angela, to be rid of the odious Tartaglia, promises him her caresses if he will consent to resurrect the little dog which she has just lost. Tartaglia submits to this caprice, but scarcely has he left his body than the legitimate king resumes it by means of the formula, whilst Tartaglia yelps and whines in the body of the dog. That is the last effort of his eloquence, for the king immediately strangles him, and thus ends the comedy.

In Bologna the office of Tartaglia is to provoke laughter at the expense of the law. It is sometimes the commissary himself, sometimes merely the police agent who is held up to ridicule. But the Corporal of the *sbirri* is his triumph. If he goes to arrest a guilty man his stammering renders him so ridiculous that everybody falls to mocking him. His choler rises to heights of fury when he perceives that the more he speaks the more the laughter increases. We hear then inarticulate cries and unearthly roars issuing from his throat. At last he departs, consigning everybody to the devil, and from a

distance we still hear his bizarre ejaculations which it would be idle to attempt to reproduce.

ii

Can we dispense with The Notary? Impossible. Does not love play its part—the principal part—in every piece? And if love is to be succeeded by Hymen must not Hymen be preceded by a notary?

It is necessary, therefore, to the end that the scenario of a gay piece shall satisfy the public, that when the dénouement is reached Ottavio shall wed Isabella, and his servant shall wed the soubrette. The notary comes to prepare the contract and to marry these young people. The old men never marry, and all their needs are to be satisfied by the apothecary. Should the notary by chance arrive in answer to their summons, it is for the purpose of drawing up their wills.

A wig with eight curls, a black gown, a bourgeoning nose pinched by enormous spectacles, an empty belly, a great foot, a cane in one hand to sustain this ponderous individual, and a portfolio in the other to balance him, shaking his head, smiling at everyone, he enters—the desired, the indispensable, the triumphant notary! He salutes the company, blows his nose and mops his brow, for he is a man of importance. After the customary pinch of snuff proffered him by Cassandro, he takes a chair, extracts his papers from his portfolio, seeks for a long time his pen which is behind his ear, and on the score of which he disturbs the entire household. It is Columbine who eventually finds it, thrust into his wig. The company sits; a circle is made, whilst the Notary cuts his pen, plucked, he says,

from the right wing of Eros, and destined to cement the happiness of the future spouses. Finally, after testing the point upon his nail, and then trimming and retrimming it a little, after having taken off and replaced his spectacles a dozen times, as if to test the patience of his clients, he makes up his mind to receive the names, patronymics and qualities of the one part and the other part.

The actual business is speedily despatched, particularly if he has been primed beforehand. Sometimes, it is true, discussions arise, and everything is on the point of being broken off. Throughout these he remains impassive. Sometimes he comes to draw up the contract of the guardian, and it is signed by the lover. This may enrage others, but it matters not at all to him. All that concerns him is to have two signatures. With these he will depart quite satisfied, particularly if he has been well paid. Having pocketed his fee he will discuss the weather, he will yawn more than is polite, and he will sometimes permit himself to accept refreshment, and even to caress the chin of the soubrette, throwing her a roguish glance over the top of his spectacles. He never refuses to join the nuptial banquet, and he is capable of remaining at table for three days and three nights without weariness ; he will never fail at each dessert to sing in a falsetto voice some old and playful couplet upon the charms and graces of the bride. Thereafter, pleased with his alleged witticisms, he will resume his eating.

There is, however, no company so good but that in the end it must be quitted. A nuptial banquet cannot last six years. The Notary will return home, supported by some of his clients, for his desire to return to his wife has been left in some of the bottles he has emptied.

Not always, however, does it happen that he is so hospitably treated. In those houses into which he comes to contravene by his ministry the desires of the true lovers, if he dares to rise from his chair to make a bow he will invariably sit down again upon nothing, to the great satisfaction and hilarity of the servants. Sometimes also his fee is laid across his back for him, after which he will not be seen again until the storm is over. At bottom he is always a good fellow, fearing his wife and the king, without any real evil in him, and residing at the corner of a street in all the cities of the world.

In the *Intronati* company, the Notary was sometimes called Ser Neri, sometimes Ser Ghello, Ser Agapito or Ser Ciappelletto.

iii

In many Italian pieces the *Podestà* or the *Bargello* plays his part in the dénouement. Neither is ever loaded with a long or a difficult rôle. Their dress is severe, their manners insignificant, they represent the law in all its rigidity.

The Commissary, being of an inferior order, is treated more cavalierly in the Italian scenarii, as in the farces of Polichinelle.

The Commissary (*to his clerk*). Come, let us make haste, open your desk, shut the door, drive away the dogs, take a chair, blow your nose, leave a wide margin and write a large hand.

The Clerk (*producing a large pen and a very small ink-horn*). Sir, let us get on if you please.

The Commissary. I shall soon be done. Accused, what is your name, surname, quality, birthplace, street, parish and lodging? Have you a father, a mother, brothers or relations? What are you doing in this town? Have you been here long? Whom do you visit? Where do you go? Whence are you

come? Set it down, scribe. (*He strikes the shoulder of his clerk.*)

The Clerk (*dropping his ink-horn*). Oh, my shoulder is broken! Behold a crippled clerk!

The Commissary. That is *punctum interrogationis*, you ignorant devil! And you, accused, are you going to answer? Set it down that he has said nothing.

The Accused. How could I, sir, when——

The Commissary. Enough! Do you think I have time to listen to all your idiocies? Don't you know that I have to see three rascals hanged to-day without counting you? Send word that the gang is not yet to set out. I have something here by which to increase it.

The Clerk. Sir, the gang will not start until you join it.

(*Collection of Gherardi.*)

iv

"*Avocats, procureurs* and *gens de chicane*," as the song has it, received fairly sharp treatment in the Italian buffooneries and the French farces alike. In these the man of the robe is represented as more grasping and thieving than his clients. They were always mocked, ridiculed and presented with malice by the actors, to the delight of the audiences that witnessed their scenic misfortunes.

"The Chicanoux earned their living by being beaten," says Rabelais. "The manner of it is as follows: When a monk, a priest, a usurer or a lawyer is ill-disposed towards a gentleman of his country, he sends him one of his Chicanoux. Chicanou will cite him to appear, will outrage him and utter impudent injuries against him according to his resources and instructions, until the gentleman, if he be not paralysed of wit and more

stupid than a frog, is compelled to answer him with blows and sword-thrusts, or, better still, to fling him through a window or from the ramparts of his castle. That done, Chicanou becomes rich for four months, as if beatings were his proper harvests. For he will receive sound compensation from the monk, the usurer or the lawyer, and from the gentleman a reparation sometimes so excessive that the latter will lose all his property in it, with danger of perishing miserably in prison, as if he had struck the king."

Many a spectator, after applauding the shower of blows with which Polichinelle rewarded this Grippeminaud or that Grapignan, would return home, considering with rage that a real Grippeminaud would come to summon him on the morrow. In Italy the naïve public would still to-day applaud the prowess of the " Seigneur de Basché daulbant sur Chicanoux," especially in certain remote districts, where law and justice are no better loved or respected than they were of old; and in such places it is not always without danger for the manager or for the actor himself when a gentlemen in black comes to parade his venality and absurdities upon the boards. On the Italian stage in Paris these caricatures of men of the robe were usually played by Harlequin or Mezzetin, and Louis XIV., far from having any notion of reprimanding their satirical allusions, laughed at them and applauded them heartily.

In the following scene Grapignan is played by Harlequin.

THE THIEF. Is Master Grapignan at home?
GRAPIGNAN. Yes, sir. I am he.
THE THIEF. Sir, I am your servant.
GRAPIGNAN. Sir, I am yours.

THE THIEF. Knowing you to be the most honest advocate amongst advocates, I come to beg you to enlighten me by your advice on a little matter which has just happened to me.

GRAPIGNAN. What is the question ?

THE THIEF. Sir, I was walking along the highway, when I was very roughly struck by a merchant, mounted on an old screw. When I asked him what he meant by it, he sided with his horse, got down and told me that the animal was not an old screw and that it was I myself who was that. Thereupon we quarrelled, and we came to blows, and as he did not happen to be the stronger I knocked him down. He got up and ran away. I ought to add that as we rolled along the ground some twenty-five or thirty pistoles fell from his pocket.

GRAPIGNAN. Ho ! ho !

THE THIEF. I picked these up, and seeing that he had already run away I got on to his horse, and I rode on as if nothing had happened. Presently I learn, sir, that this rascal has been lodging a complaint against me, charging me with being a highway robber. I beg you to tell me whether there is about my action the least appearance of such a thing ! Inform me, I beg of you, whither this affair is likely to lead me ?

GRAPIGNAN. Faith ! If the affair is conducted with heat it may very well lead you to the hangman. We must get you out of it. Did anybody see you ?

THE THIEF. No, sir.

GRAPIGNAN. So much the better. To begin with we must lock up the horse. For if the merchant came to discover it, seeing that he has no other witness, he would not fail to have it interrogated upon the facts, and then you would be lost.

THE THIEF. There is nothing to be feared on that score. The old screw is incapable of unlocking its teeth.

GRAPIGNAN. Do not trust to that. Every day we behold dumb witnesses bringing about the downfall of the accused.

THE THIEF. The devil !

GRAPIGNAN. We must lose no time. We must begin by procuring witnesses at any price.

THE THIEF. But there was no one on the highway at that moment.

GRAPIGNAN. Never mind, never mind. We will discover someone who was there. . . . I have in mind a couple of Normans who sometimes work for me; but they will not undertake the matter save at a good price, for they have just issued from an affair in which without me . . . you understand. (*He puts his hand on his neck in a gesture suggestive of hanging.*) Also it is a fact that witnesses are very dear this year.

THE THIEF. How does that happen?

GRAPIGNAN. It is because no quarter is given them, they hang as many of them as they can discover.

THE THIEF. If it is only a matter of money, sir, here is my purse with twenty-four pistoles.

GRAPIGNAN. Heh! Heh! That may suffice for one witness, but there are two of them. Haven't you anything else, any jewellery, any old diamond? On occasions like this, it is necessary to know how to bleed oneself.

THE THIEF. Here is a diamond worth another twenty pistoles, and here a watch, which may be worth twelve.

GRAPIGNAN. Well, well, out of love of you I might advance five or six pistoles myself. After that we'll make our accounts.

THE THIEF. Do so, sir. I place myself in your hands, and I trust myself to your discretion.

GRAPIGNAN. Very well, then. It will be an extraordinary thing if, with my two witnesses, I do not have your accuser sent to the galleys. (*The thief departs.*) Twenty-four pistoles on the one hand, a watch and a diamond on the other: is it not better that I should profit by these things than the provost? For this poor devil will undoubtedly be sent to the wheel without delay!

Such is M. Grapignan, who succeeds in robbing even highway robbers.

V

Il Sbirro (the Constable) was ever a type greatly in vogue in the Italian comedy. He is the same personage as the *Sergent du Guet* of the booth of Polichinelle, under the names of *Corporal Rogantino, Corporal Simone, Capo de gli Sbirri,* etc. Like the *Podestà* (chief magistrate), this terrific personage appears but little in the course of the plot's development.

A vast felt hat, an enormous cloak, great strong boots, a long sword, enormous moustachios and a cardboard nose, and there you have the elements out of which to construct a constable. This raiment was always hung upon a nail behind the first wing. The whole could be put on like a dressing-gown, for it is often Harlequin, Mezzetin, Scapin or some other lackey who passes himself off as something that he is not. But let them have a care! For often at the moment when they least expect it there appears on the other side of the stage a real Sbirro, who moves silently in the shadow, wrapped to the eyes in his great cloak. But his heavy boots alone make so much noise that it would be necessary to be as deaf as Pandolfe not to hear him. What are the uses of this sombre personage? To execute justice upon the traitors and evildoers of the comedy. He was born anywhere. He is of any age, or rather he is so old that he is of none. He lives everywhere. He is, he has been, and he will be. He is as ancient as comedy. But his spirit is obtuse, and unpardonable mistakes are common with him. Being strong of hand and tight of grip, he is feared by all. Harlequin flees before him as though he were the plague. Mezzetin fears him more than fire, and the same is the case with the good Pierrot, although he has done nothing

to draw upon himself the constable's attention. Polichinelle alone is not afraid of him. He is his greatest enemy. On no single occasion have they met but that sound blows have been exchanged, and the Sbirro has not always issued in triumph from the contest. But what matter? He is strong in his conscience and the support of the law, and knows nothing but his duty.

vi

If the doctor was ridiculed on the Italian stage and in the comedies of Molière, the APOTHECARY was not spared. But this worthy corps of science triumphs in the person of *M. de Pourceaugnac*; he knows how to keep his place, and never in the slightest degree does he impinge upon the rights of the medical faculty.

"No, I am not a doctor," says the apothecary to Eraste, "mine is not that honour, and I am but an apothecary, an unworthy apothecary, your servant."

In *Le Malade Imaginaire* M. Fleurant is the model apothecary; he is fully conscious of his worth, and does not jest on the subject of his drugs. He is no longer the simple Matassin who, to introduce his merchandise, seeks to deafen his client by bellowing its virtues in his ear.

In the plays of Gherardi he bears the most ridiculous names, like those of *Viseautrou*, *Cussiffle* and *Clistorel*, and other kindred ones. Callot calls him Maramao, and dresses him in a manner but little different from the apothecaries to be seen in the comedies of Molière. He presents him with a cap on his head, an apron about his body, armed with his favourite

weapon, which is as long as a culverin, and levelling it with precision at Cardoni.

In the Italian comedy the apothecary is treated still better than in the comedy-ballets of Molière. He plays a part, comes to mingle in the plot, and alludes to his art in metaphors and symbols.

"I am persuaded, sir" (he says, addressing the Doctor, whose daughter he seeks in marriage), "that a pierced chair would more aptly denote an apothecary than a sedan chair." (He has been brought on in a sedan chair.) "But as such a vehicle would not put me in good odour with my mistress, I have had myself borne to your house in an elegant manner, to present you my respects and all the submission which pharmacy owes to medicine. I bring you a desperate patient, with whom simples are of no effect, and whose cure in itself will shed the highest credit upon your faculty.

"It is I, sir, who am both the patient and the illness; it is I who am diseased to my very marrow by this terrible ailment. It is I who am corroded by the perfections of Columbine. It is I who desire to marry her, and finally it is I who implore you to prescribe it me as a savoury decoction, which I shall swallow with delight. To the Doctor all the honour, and to the apothecary all the pleasure of it."

XVII

SOME CARNIVAL MASKS

When it is considered that the greater part of the jests and the types of Molière are to be found grossly but energetically sketched in the Commedia dell' Arte—that is to say, in the farces and parodies which, without announcement of author and without printed publication, assembled audiences for so many centuries before the appearance of the great Poquelin—there can be no doubt that the interest of our researches will be recognised just as it will be seen that they are without any pretensions to raise the subject above its exact literary value. For us it has been primarily an exploration in the archives of the eternal comedy. Other lights will come in the course of time to complete this work and to prove that the greatest comedian in the world is the people that inhabit it.

Apart from their types of comedy the Italians possess a crowd of other masks to be seen in the streets and public places during the last three consecutive days of Carnival. A great number of these masks had their birth in the theatres from which they have long since disappeared; but the majority are no more than the products of fancy or fashion: of these are the *Quacqueri*, who correspond to the French *Chicards*, and whose costume is a medley of ancient and modern fashions; the *Matti* (fools), arrayed in long white shirts, wearing a night-cap and a white mask, the neck smothered in an enormous collar. Men and women dressed thus run with the crowd,

performing a thousand follies, some with tambourines, some with baubles, but most of them armed with sticks from the end of which hangs a bladder or a wet sponge, with which they strike all the other masks they meet.

The costume of *Bajaccio* or *Pagliaccio* is still very much in favour during carnival, as is that of Pulcinella, both for men and women. The *Maghi* (sorcerers) is a character adopted by graver folk, as is that of the *Abbatacci*, who, dressed entirely in black, saving for one white stocking, go aping the ways of advocates and other men of the robe. *Le Poverelle* (female mendicants; a disguise for women) cover their faces with a white mask, release their hair, and let it fall upon their shoulders and dress entirely in white; the *Poverelle* form into troupes and go in quest of alms, which consist of flowers, fruits and sweetmeats. Other disguises greatly in vogue are those of *Marinari* and *Pescatori* (sailors and fishermen), of *Giardinieri* and *Giardiniere* (male and female gardeners), *Cascherini* (topers), *Scopetti* (sweeps), etc.

In a collection entitled *Trattato su la comedia dell' arte, ossia improvisa*, a title but little justified by the reproduction of five masks of the Italian comedy, Francesco Valentini published in Berlin in 1826 a volume containing a large quantity of these carnival costumes. It would be impossible to give a better idea of the scenes that were to be witnessed during Carnival than by translating some passages from Valentini's sketch:

"I am now compelled" (he writes), "so as to render my little treatise as little incomplete as possible, to present some little scenes which take place in the streets of Rome. And that I

may succeed in this, I beg that in imagination you will transport yourselves with me to some place in the neighbourhood of the Corso, where our theatre is set up.

"It is the twentieth hour (in other words, two o'clock in the afternoon), and no one is yet to be seen. The sky is overcast, but the weather will be safe; it will not snow.

"Behold! here already is a Pulcinella, playing a trumpet, leaping and talking. Let us listen. He complains of the indolence of the masks; it is after two o'clock, and they are not yet ready; a very little more would induce him to beat them. He departs quite angrily, protecting his better half, who leans upon his arm.

"Suddenly there is a great noise; a Harlequin, walking on tiptoe, lantern in hand, leads the way for a *Quacquero* and his lady, the *Quacqueressa*; with him comes a *Bajaccio* under an open sunshade. What the devil's this, my friend, a sunshade and a lantern? Night and sunshine? Yonder our desolate Pulcinella is returning, and he who lately was lamenting is now at the very summit of hilarity; he has just met another Pulcinella, to whom he relinquishes his wife. Reciprocal joy. Here comes an *Abbataccio* and here two or three *Quacqueri*, *Poverelle*, *Sbirri*, *Micheletti*; and last a Captain *Fracasso* in argument with a Tartaglia:

"'If you don't return at once to the galleys I will cut you in two, piece of a thief!'

"'*Vo . . . i . . . v'in . . . ga . . . gannate*,' replies Tartaglia, '*io non sono . . . chi . . . chi . . . ricer . . . ca . . . ca . . . cacate*' (You are mistaken, I am not he whom you are seeking).

"Listen, listen to the Harlequins, crying as they run: *Chi . . . chi . . . chichirichi chic . . . chirichi!*

"Turn now to this *Abbataccio*, a book under his arm, who with the assistance of other masks has just seized upon a poor imbecile of a peasant, who has come to see the Roman carnival, and who certainly never expected to become an actor in this farce: 'You are my debtor,' he bellows at him, 'these last two years, these last two centuries. Your grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, or, if you prefer it, your archi-great devil of a father, who was my man of affairs, wrote me a bill of exchange. Don't you believe it? Do you deny the patent truth? I am going to show it to you.' With that he opens his book, which turns out to be nothing but a flour box, blows into it, and thus almost blinds the poor peasant, who was gaping at him. He becomes the butt of the laughter and ridicule of all who are present. A mask in the dress of a groom comes to rub him down; the sweeps sweep him, and a fool mystifies him. The peasant attempts to depart, but at this moment a Doctor, an Apothecary and some Matassins insist upon offering him their services. 'He has turned pale,' cries one, pointing to his flour-covered face, 'he is about to die.' He gets away at last and darts round a corner of the street, followed by his mockers, of whom heaven alone knows when he will succeed in ridding himself.

"What is this noise? What is happening? 'A Spectre, a Spectre!' (*una Fantasima!*) cries someone, and you behold the Pulcinelli, Arlecchini, Brighelli, Pantaloni cutting a thousand capers of terror. Captain *Ammazzasette* (Rodomont) puts his hand to his sword and runs to meet the phantom, which

lengthens itself almost indefinitely, and then disappears, to the great shouts of the assembly.

"Observe this crowd, listen to this noise! Here comes the cause of it: a well-harnessed donkey, bearing the king of the Polichinelles with two little Polichinelles, his sons, seated in the panniers. His court, consisting of thirty or forty Polichinelles, escorts him, playing all conceivable instruments. This general masquerade is extraordinary, capricious and very droll. Consider that no two wear the same head-dress; one wears a huge wig, another a basket, some an evil hat, others go with shaven heads, and yet another bears a cage with birds in it."

This scene is illustrated in the work, and indeed each Pulcinella wears a fantastic head-dress. But the remainder of the costume is invariable. It consists of a sort of round skirt in grey linen bordered with red or blue, descending to the knee; the front of this blouse, open upon the breast, ends in a heart of red cloth. The trousers, similarly decorated with red or blue, are wide and do not go below the ankle. These garments are caught to the figure by a cord, from which hangs a copper bell, similar to that which mountaineers hang about the necks of their cattle. The mask is black or brown, the cap traditionally pointed, whilst the wide ruff and the black shoes complete the costume of the Pulcinella of carnival, such as he was in 1826.

"Along the Corso, from end to end, the people swarm like ants. There is no window that is not crowded with sightseers. And how varied is the assembly! Here ranks, ages and sexes are all intermingled and confounded. Joy, gaiety and good humour rule; pleasantries, practical jokes, laughter,

nosegays and clouds of flour on this side, and a rain of flowers on the other, long queues of carriages filled with masks, and ancient coaches on which the youthful nobility of Rome is representing the abduction of Proserpine. Next we see women disguised as officers, as sailors, as natives of Frascati or Albania. Two squadrons of ancient warriors on cardboard horses engage furiously in combat, and so on. The revels conclude with races of unfettered and unmounted horses down the middle of the Corso. Such is the Roman carnival until the hour of the Angelus, at the sound of which everyone unmasks, and all go to conclude the day at the theatre, at a soirée, or at home. Shrove Tuesday being the last day, the Angelus bell is impotent to command obedience; all retain their masks and then begins the scene of the *Moccoli*, too well known to need reporting here."

After alluding thus superficially to some of the masks of the Roman carnival, we may not pass in silence over several singular fantastic and religious types, indispensable to all the scenarii of mystery plays performed by the marionettes in Italy and in a less degree elsewhere. These are Satana or the Devil, Mago or the Warlock, L'Incantatrice or the Fairy, the Good Genius, the Archangel Michael and all the spirits who preside over the elements, over nature, and so on. These personages, the last surviving vestiges of the mystery plays, have marched down the centuries step by step with the masks. The moment that an Italian scenario departs from absolute reality it invariably falls into the marvellous. The *fiabesco*, or fairy style, reached its highest diapason in the eighteenth century at the hands of Carlo Gozzi.

XVIII

CARLO GOZZI AND CARLO GOLDONI

At the end of the eighteenth century, when the Italian comedy was dying in France, having been fused into comic opera and French comedy, it was also expiring in a literary sense in Italy, but not without one last flicker, perhaps the most brilliant of all since the days of Ruzzante.

Carlo Gozzi did for the Commedia dell' Arte the very opposite of that which had been done by Beolco (Ruzzante). The latter had protested against the academic language of his day. He had enthroned the dialects upon the stage, and proved that this rustic speech was the only one suitable to rustic and bourgeois pieces. Some two hundred years later, towards 1750, Carlo Gozzi, finding the Italian language softened by the various schools of literature through which it had passed, considered it a fitting vehicle to convey the ideas of all classes; and after a stern and derisive fight with the theatre of Goldoni, which was imbued with the Venetian spirit, he became the exclusive poet, the absolute master of an excellent company. Sacchi, the principal of this company, had with him some precious actors, and he himself was a Truffaldino of the very first rank.

"Never again," says Gozzi himself, "shall we see a Truffaldino like Sacchi, a Brighella like Zanoni or a Tartaglia like Fiorilli, this Neapolitan full of fire, and so justly famous throughout Italy. Nor shall we see again such another

Pantaloon as Darbés, this comedian self-contained or impetuous at will, majestic, stupid and so true to life that the Venetian citizen thinks to see himself mirrored upon the stage when he beholds this perfect model of his absurdities. La Smeralda was an angel in grace, a butterfly in lightness. With three words these people knew how to play a scene so as to make their audiences die of laughter. Never would they have suffered a piece to fail on its first performance. Sooner would they have manufactured another one on the spot. It was necessary that the spectators should laugh for their money, for the players were honest, and not for the devil himself would they have returned the price of the tickets. I lived with them for ten years amid noise, quarrels, storms and injuries, and all with so much pleasure that I would not exchange those ten years for all the rest of my life. They would have burned Venice for me. Alas! everything comes to an end. The extinction and dispersion of the company is one of my greatest sorrows. Goldoni placed his trust in imposing and deceptive words; and words are omnipotent with spirits of narrow limitations; his pieces will perhaps return to the surface, whilst my poor fables, if once forgotten, will never see the light again."

These poor fables, which indeed are very much forgotten in Italy, and very little known elsewhere, are none the less destined to live in the archives of the Commedia dell' Arte. They are not exactly scenarii, the rôles being succinctly and wittily written, particularly in those parts in which the actors had to express serious or passionate sentiments, which in the main are difficult to improvise.

"I flatter myself" (he says) "to have been of use to the company and to the art. Who could count all that out of complaisance I have written for them of prologues and of farewells in verse, of scenes to be interposed, of compliments for pretty actresses who were passing through, of additions to the farces, of soliloquies, of despairs, of menaces, of reproaches and of prayers?"

The scenarii of the pieces of Gozzi might simply be called fairy tales in action, the *fiabesco* or, as it were, the fabulous. They are very pretty stories, and their principal scenic merit lies in the alternation of burlesque with dramatic situation. Gozzi himself called them nursery tales, but if so they are written by a very poetical nurse for no less poetical nurslings. Hoffmann steeped himself in them to produce his fantastic tales. M. Paul de Musset, in one of his writings full of grace and good sense, upon modern Italy (*Revue des Deux-Mondes*), has characterised perfectly the bizarre genius of the Italian librettist and that of the German narrator.

The principal pieces of Carlo Gozzi are: *The Love of the Three Oranges*, *The Raven*, *The King Stag*, *Turandot*, *The Woman Serpent*, *The Happy Beggars*, *The Blue Monster*, *La Zobéide* and *The Green Bird*. These subjects gave scope to improvisation, to fancy and to that immense share held by a group of inventive and witty actors in the success of a theatrical work.

Gozzi was surnamed the Aristophanes of the Adriatic. But the Signora Teodora Ricci supervened. "*Amour, tu perdis Troie!*" Gozzi, who until then had allowed himself to be cajoled by all the charming comediennes of the company,

fell in love with the Signora Ricci, who had no talent whatever. Sacchi, the old Truffaldino, was the rival of the poet, his best friend. The other actresses became jealous, and the men took sides in the contest. The end of it was the dispersal of the company. Gozzi found himself compelled to change his style. He followed the example of Goldoni, whom he had so consistently mocked, he wrote and arranged plays in the foreign taste for Signora Ricci, with the result that his dramatic genius was extinguished in compilation.

Happily the secret fire of his active genius was re-ignited, and his spirit revealed itself under a different form. He turned to the writing of satires—"the best fruits borne by this fecund tree."

"The year 1797," says M. Paul de Musset, "arrived. Gozzi witnessed the fall of his country as a result of treachery, its abandonment by the French general, the entrance of the German bayonets and the derisive election of Doge Manin, his friend. Heaven alone knows what had become in this conflict of the Pantaloons and Truffaldini! The year of Carlo Gozzi's death is not even known. Nor do we know the year in which he was born. This bizarre genius passed like one of those comets whose course we have not the time to study."

It may be well to cite some fragments and reflections of Carlo Gozzi on the nature and the history of the Commedia dell' Arte, and particularly of the success scored by this genre in Germany.

"The improvised comedy, known as the Commedia dell' Arte, was in all times the most useful to the troupes of Italian come-

dians. It has existed for three hundred years. It has always been attacked but never conquered. It seems impossible that certain men of our day, who pass for authors, should not perceive that they are ridiculous when they condescend to step from their importance to an amusing anger against a Brighella, a Pantaloon, a Doctor, a Tartaglia or a Truffaldino. This anger, which appears to be the result of intoxication, clearly shows that in Italy the Commedia dell' Arte survives in all its vigour the shame of the persecutions exerted against it.

" I consider sound impromptu comedians as of much greater worth than improvising poets who, without saying anything of any sense, captivate the attention of those assemblies gathered to hear them.

" The improvised Italian comedy, called *dell' arte*, is very ancient and very much more ancient than the regular and written Italian comedies. It had its beginnings in Lombardy, whence it spread through Italy and penetrated into France, where it is still to be found. In the sixteenth century it was no more permitted to women to be present at improvised comedies than at written ones. Both styles alike had become too licentious. We may judge of the obscenities of the written pieces, but not of those which were improvised, and which we know only from tradition.[1] These two styles were always in rivalry.

[1] On this score Gozzi is absolutely mistaken, so far at least as Ruzzante is concerned, whom evidently he had never read. Ruzzante's pieces, as we have said, are never licentious, and virtuous women attended their performance. " *Ad audiendas eas hominum tam mulierum concursus*," says B. Scardeon. This is further proved by the prologues which Beolco himself recited, and in which he frequently addressed himself to the good and beautiful ladies of the audience, sometimes rebuking

"In the time of the Austrian emperors Leopold, Joseph and Charles VI., the French comedians made all possible efforts to keep their place in the two theatres of Vienna. But they were dismissed by these emperors, who desired none but German and Italian comedians in their theatres, and of these they gave preference to those of their own nation. The Vienna companies of comedians followed the same working methods as those of Italy, and the improvised comedy which we call Commedia dell' Arte was preferred. Weiskern, Heindrich, Leinhaus, Prehauser, Kurz, Jacquedt, Stéphanie, Muller, Breuner, Gottlieb, La Huberin, La Nutin, La Elizonin, and La Schwargerin were clever performers who played improvised comedy in German.

"Il Ganzachi, an able Italian comedian of our acquaintance, who speaks German very fluently, went to reinforce the Vienna company with the personnel and the material of our own theatre. Weiskern and Heindrich played old men's parts; Leinhaus played Pantaloon in German with a Venetian accent; Prehauser played Hanswurst, a sort of second Zanni; Kurz played Bernardone; Brenner was seen as *Il Burlino* (the jester); Gottlieb as a village idiot; La Nutin, La Elizonin, and La Schwagerin played the feminine rôles, and all were as much beloved by the public as are Sacchi, Fiorilli, Zanoni, Darbés, Coralina and Smeraldina by ours.

"The detractors of this style claimed to have buried it.

them upon the exaggerated fashions of their toilettes, sometimes speaking to them of faithful love and of conjugal love in the most naïve, and at the same time the most idealistic manner. In the *Gelosia*, of Lasca (1581), there is a prologue addressed entirely to ladies, as is also the case with *Il Granchio*, of Salviati (1566) and several other comedies of the sixteenth century.

Improvised comedy, they said, no longer exists even in Italy ; everywhere now comedy is recited from memory. But anyone who cares to look at the manuscript which serves as a guide to these excellent comedians will find a single sheet of paper placed near a little lamp, for the greater convenience of the entire troupe ; upon this sheet is the whole matter from which ten to twelve persons will keep an audience in laughter for three hours, and conduct to its proper conclusion the story set forth.

" To give our reader a specimen of the guide which suffices for our improvising comedians, I will transcribe here a subject which I read by the light of the little theatre lamp, without adding or subtracting a single word. It is that of *The Broken Contracts*, which we see performed several times each year, and always with success.

ACT I

LEGHORN

BRIGHELLA enters the stage, sees no one and calls.
PANTALOON enters, simulates fear.
BRIGHELLA wants to leave his service.
PANTALOON recommends himself to him.
BRIGHELLA is touched, and promises him his assistance.
PANTALOON says that his creditors demand payment, especially Truffaldino, and that this is the last day allowed him, etc.
BRIGHELLA pacifies him.

At this moment :

TRUFFALDINO. Scene in which he demands payment.
BRIGHELLA finds a way to fend him off.
PANTALOON and BRIGHELLA remain.

At this moment:

TARTAGLIA, at the window, listens.

BRIGHELLA perceives this. Plays a scene with Pantaloon pretending wealth.

TARTAGLIA comes down into the street to pretend to beg alms of Pantaloon. In the end they agree upon the marriage of the daughter of Tartaglia and the son of Pantaloon.

At this moment:

TRUFFALDINO says that he wants his money.

BRIGHELLA pretends that Pantaloon gives it to him. When this has happened three times all go off.

FLORINDO speaks of his love for Rosaura and of the hunger that torments him. He knocks.

ROSAURA listens to his protestations, wants to put him to the test, and asks for a present.

FLORINDO says this is not possible at the moment as he has no means.

ROSAURA bids him wait, telling him that she will make him a present, and goes off.

FLORINDO remains.

At this moment:

SMERALDINA, with a basket which she gives to Florindo, and goes off.

FLORINDO eats.

BRIGHELLA, having heard that Rosaura has sent this basket, steals it and escapes.

FLORINDO follows him.

LEANDRO speaks of his love for Rosaura. He seeks to deceive Pantaloon.

At this moment:

TARTAGLIA comes on, speaking to himself of the great wealth of Pantaloon.

LEANDRO asks for the hand of his daughter.

TARTAGLIA replies that she is affianced to the son of Pantaloon.

LEANDRO is astonished; he makes a scene, etc., etc.

"From this textually rendered sheet" (says Gozzi) "comes the comedy *I Contratti Rotti*, and from more than four hundred other formulæ as concise as this come all our Commedia dell' Arte. Such plays as these are not at the mercy of the sudden illness of an actor, or the fact that another has been recently recruited; a simple arrangement, broadly made, concerning the basis of the scenic action, suffices for a successful performance. At the moment of taking up the curtain it often happens that the description of the rôles is changed according to circumstances, the relative importance or the ability of the actors. Nevertheless the comedy marches happily and gaily to its conclusion. Not a year passes but that some scenes are added or subtracted from the argument, and a simple announcement made to the company is all that is needed for the change to be ably executed. It will be seen that these clever actors work upon the very basis of their subjects, establishing always their scenes upon different foundations, and filling in the dialogue with so much variety that they are always new and perdurable. I have frequently heard these improvisors reproach themselves with having badly established (*mal piantato*) some scene or other, and proceed to re-establish it at once by excellent arguments in such a way as to prepare their companions for a fresh attempt.

"It is very true that in this style of comedy some serious actors, and more particularly some actressses, have a very arsenal of premeditated material committed to memory,

material which serves for intercessions, for reproaches, for threats, for the expression of despair and for sentiments of jealousy ; but it is none the less surprising to see that, face to face with the public and improvising with other improvisors, they are able to hold this material in readiness, and to select from the mass with which their brains are stored, that which is suitable to the occasion, expressing it with energy, and earning the applause of the spectators.

" Such is the system of our improvised comedy, a glorious art which our nation alone can claim for its own, and one that, in the course of three centuries, has by no means exhausted its wit.

" It would take too long to enumerate the four hundred and more subjects which are continually being renewed in the dialogues. The clever actors who succeed the clever actors who die suffice to give an eternal aspect of novelty to these subjects. We see Roderigo Lombardi, an excellent Doctor, replaced by Agostino Fiorilli, a clever Tartaglia, renewing each subject merely by the differences that lie between their respective talents. A single new original personage suffices to revive the originality of the entire company."

Gozzi informs us, however, that the authors of his day, and notably Goldoni, wrote their dialogue after the first performance, and published the scenarii which had been successful in the hands of improvising comedians. For the rest, the majority of Italian comic authors have proceeded thus. Nearly all the comedies of the seventeenth century are extracted from old improvised scenarii of which Gozzi gives us a very curious although very incomplete list. He cites among others :

"The famous Domenico Biancolelli, who has caused to be performed in dialogue a very large number of improvised Italian scenarii. His comedies are printed, but they have remained unfruitful, whilst the very same subjects, treated by improvisation, are still greatly appreciated in the theatre." He further tells us that comedies written and recited by comedians who memorise them, which had never succeeded in bringing together sixty spectators, would attract a crowd from the moment that the improvisors took possession of the subject to embroider it in their own manner.

Many plays written up after the first performance, and published in the *sostenuta* form, have served none but reading purposes. The comedians *dell' arte* took no notice of them, preferring their old dry and succinct résumés, which left their wit very much more free and untrammelled.

But whatever Gozzi may say, he has followed, like Goldoni, the extremely felicitous mixed style, half-memorised, half-improvised. It remains, however, that this mixed style could only be treated successfully by an original spirit, and one sufficiently in sympathy with his actors to leave them a free hand. It was a style that ended with himself. All that remained of it after him was the custom in Italy to cause certain comic masks to appear in the course of all sorts of performances.

Carlo Goldoni began, like Gozzi, and before Gozzi, by writing scenarii for the Commedia dell' Arte. Numerous traces of this must remain in Italy, but Goldoni himself refused to edit these skeletons, of which he was unjustly ashamed, until he had written them anew with full dialogue, and thereby changed and converted them into complete plays. We have seen Gozzi reproach him with having ruined, by means of this cold

work, many felicitous subjects in which the improvisors shone, subjects which, for the rest, were of no use to the comedians of his day in their new form, or else (according to Gozzi) were of use only for performance at banquets.

The quarrel between these two authors and their adherents was a very lively one. Both had a deal of merit; Goldoni's was the greater wisdom, observation and reality, Gozzi's the better invention, wit and originality. Both began in the same way by leaving an open field to improvisation. Little by little each felt the need to write up the rôles, and to substitute his own personality for those of the comedians. Both followed for some time the mixed style—that is to say, writing up the serious rôles, and leaving the rôles of the masks to improvisation. In the end both brought about the disappearance of the latter, Gozzi in spite of himself, and with infinite regret for his beloved Sacchi company; Goldoni, on the other hand, with the deliberate resolve to suppress masks and dialects, or to relegate them to a place of secondary importance. Thus he no longer permits them to improvise, but himself writes their dialogues for them. It was upon this ground that Gozzi was able victoriously to attack him. That which is written for improvisors is of necessity pale, cold and heavy, and it would be far better not to see Truffaldino or Tartaglia at all than to see them gagged by the logic of the author.

The sentence of death which Goldoni attempted to pronounce against the Commedia dell' Arte is fully set forth in his piece entitled *Il Teatro Comico*, which he himself has placed at the head of his collection (edition of Turin, 1756), declaring it to be a sort of preface to his work. There is very little that is

amusing in this comedy ; it is rather to be considered a critical piece ; but it is of interest to students of the history of this style.

A theatrical director is rehearsing some new actors in a fresh piece, and dissertating at length upon the subject :

ORAZIO (*the manager of the company*). You see that it is very necessary to procure actors who are united by a literary convention ; without that they will usually fall into the trite or the unnatural.

EUGENIO (*the second lover in the company*). Then it becomes necessary entirely to suppress the improvised comedy ?

ORAZIO. Entirely, no ! It is as well that Italians should continue masters of an art which other nations had not the courage to create. The French are in the habit of saying that Italian comedians are very daring to risk making impromptu speeches to the public ; but that which may be called temerity on the part of ignorant comedians is a fine quality with comedians of ability, and, to the honour of Italy and the glory of our art be it said, there are still many excellent personages who bear triumphantly and meritoriously the admirable prerogative of speaking impromptu with as much elegance as the poet may achieve in writing.

EUGENIO. But usually the masks are at a loss when they utter what is premeditated.

ORAZIO. When what is premeditated is brilliant, graceful, well suited to the character of the personage which is to utter it, all good masks will learn it gladly.

EUGENIO. Would it not be possible to suppress masks in character comedies ?

ORAZIO. Woe to us were we to attempt such an innovation ! It is not yet time to risk it. In all things we must not offend universal taste. In other times the public attended comedy only to laugh, and they desired to see no other actors on the stage but the masks. Did the serious characters render the dialogue a little too long, at once they grew weary ; to-day

they have learned to listen to serious rôles, to enjoy words, to be interested by events, to favour the moral, to laugh at the sallies and altercations derived from the serious itself. But the masks are still beheld with pleasure, and it is not necessary to withdraw them altogether. Rather let us seek to limit their conventions and to bridle their ridiculous characters.

EUGENIO. But this is a very difficult way of composing.

ORAZIO. It is a way that has lately been rediscovered, and to which we devote ourselves. Very soon we shall see the most fertile wits rising to improve it, as is desired with all his heart by him who invented it.

Notwithstanding this naïvely perfidious attitude, Goldoni did not dare until very late entirely to suppress the masks; but he had so completely transformed them that they might well look upon him as their assassin. Success abandoned him in a measure as he denaturalised the national taste in the speeches of these personages, who, thanks to him, came to utter dialogues in the French fashion—that is to say, like lackeys and soubrettes imitating their masters. He acknowledged himself beaten, became a Frenchman, and produced in France *Le Bourru Bienfaisant*; that, after all, was his real genre.

It is none the less true, and Gozzi himself recognised it, that Goldoni had worked for the Italian theatre, especially at the beginning, in a felicitous and amusing manner. His Venetian pieces are still quite charming, notwithstanding the narrower and heavier garb which he gave them in redressing them for his readers. Compelled to leave the Venetian dialect to his principal comic personages, he has contrived to produce some real characters for the comedy of manners. Nevertheless the sum total of his theatrical work does not sufficiently justify

the title awarded him of the *Italian Molière.* If any Italian genius deserves such a comparison it is the genius of Ruzzante, who at once actor and author was, like our great Poquelin, nourished upon Plautus and Terence, upon whom, like him again, he improved considerably.

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